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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 19 April 2001**

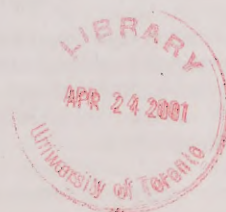
**Jeudi 19 avril 2001**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers





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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 April 2001

*The first day of the second session of the 37th Parliament of the province of Ontario commenced at 1330 pursuant to a proclamation of the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of the province.*

*Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor was pleased to open the session by reading the speech from the throne.*

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

#### DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

**Hon Hilary M. Weston (Lieutenant Governor):**

Pray be seated.

Members of the Legislative Assembly, citizens of Ontario:

Good afternoon and welcome to the second session of Ontario's 37th Parliament.

Today, on Yom HaShoah, we pause to remember victims of the Holocaust. We join citizens around the world in pledging, "Never again."

Since the assembly last met, Ontario has lost three distinguished public servants.

Ellen MacKinnon, the first female legislator from Lambton county, cared deeply about our education system and devoted herself to building a better society.

Wilf Spooner was an accomplished cabinet minister whose commitment to the people of the north, including the residents of his hometown, Timmins, earned him the nickname "Mr Northern Ontario."

The sudden loss of Al Palladini reminded us how fragile human life is. We remember his sense of humour, love of life, compassion for others and desire to give back to a country that gave him so much. He will be missed.

Those who have gone before provide the inspiration to move forward and build a brighter future for all.

Since 1995, your government's plan to improve the lives of Ontario families has been consistent and clear. The plan is to strengthen the economy by cutting taxes, reducing red tape and eliminating barriers to economic growth.

Your government's goal is ambitious, yet achievable: that within 10 years Ontario will enjoy the best-performing economy and the highest quality of life in North America.

Economic strength and quality of life are inseparable. Only a strong economy provides the means to support important services such as accessible health care and quality education. Seule une économie robuste permet de fournir une aide aux enfants, aux aînés ainsi qu'aux

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 avril 2001

personnes les plus vulnérables de notre société. Only a strong economy offers hard-working families the promise of a better life.

The plan is working. The people of Ontario have seized new opportunities, yielding remarkable results: more than 822,000 new jobs, more than 578,000 people escaped welfare.

In the last two years, Ontario's economy outperformed that of each G-7 nation—growth unseen since 1985.

The successes of yesterday do not, however, obscure the challenges of today.

Ontario faces real and pressing tests. The world economy is changing at a rapid pace. Local economies that fail to adapt or cannot compete will be left behind.

Responsible choices must be made if our province is to remain competitive and strong.

Amid global uncertainty and change, the provincial economy continues to grow, but slowly.

Responsible choices are required to keep the economy growing, and to determine spending priorities among competing demands that in total would far exceed the growth in revenue.

Health care spending has increased at a dramatic pace: 27% in five years, 19% in the past two years alone. Yet spending does not equate to quality. Is Ontario's health care system 19% better than two years ago? The United States and Canada lead the world in health spending; do they lead the world in health care?

To increase spending without improving quality is unwise. To increase spending unsupported by economic growth is unsustainable.

In recent years, even as Ontario's "red-hot" economy grew at an historic pace, health spending grew faster. At the current rate of increase, within five years health spending would consume 60% of the Ontario government's operating budget, up from 44% today and 38% since the government was first elected.

Other provinces face the same challenges. In Saskatchewan, government health care spending is projected to increase faster than government revenue, leading to a gap of \$300 million at the end of four years. In Nova Scotia, within 10 years, rising health costs could consume the entire provincial government budget.

Responsible choices and tough decisions are needed not merely to sustain, but quite literally to save, Canada's health care system.

1340

To meet all the challenges of the 21st century, your government has chosen to focus on three priorities: growth, fiscal responsibility and accountability.



Growth—growth in the economy, growth in jobs—remains your government's top priority. It will act with speed and conviction, pursuing a pro-growth agenda that will protect jobs, keep families financially secure and maintain the strength of all communities.

Sustained growth is essential to protect the gains that have been made. Sustained growth is essential to continued support for health care, education and other services that people depend on.

Fiscal responsibility begins with the prudent use of tax dollars—a focus on priorities such as health care, education, environmental protection and infrastructure.

Fiscal responsibility requires that everything government does, it does efficiently, while offering citizens best value at lowest cost. Yet it also demands that government make clear choices about what it cannot and should not do. The principle of “doing better for less” is important, but it only applies to functions government should perform in the first place.

Accountability is required, not just of Ontario's government, but of all governments and indeed of all institutions funded by taxpayers.

Government is the servant of the people, not master. Citizens are more than “customers” or “clients”; the entire public sector belongs to them. Citizens are entitled to transparency in the operation of public institutions, including openness about how they spend and reporting of their performance and results.

Growth, fiscal responsibility and accountability: these priorities underlie an action plan outlining the new ideas and decisive steps essential to protect the economy and sustain Ontario's quality of life: an action plan of 21 steps leading into the 21st century.

The first part of the action plan is presented in this speech. The remainder will be outlined in a series of daily announcements, culminating in the provincial budget, May 9.

The steps of the plan are clear and measurable, allowing citizens to hold their government accountable for its commitments. The government will provide regular progress reports to the people and the Legislature.

A new task force will measure and monitor Ontario's productivity, competitiveness and economic progress compared to other provinces and the US states. The independent task force, led by Roger Martin, dean of the Joseph L. Rotman School of Management and one of Canada's leading experts on competitiveness, will report to the public on a regular basis.

Ontario must remain competitive with the rest of the world. Taxes must be competitive. The regulatory climate must be conducive to investment and job creation.

Barriers to economic growth threaten jobs, the standard of living and opportunities for future generations. Removing them is the first step of the plan.

Pour éliminer les obstacles à l'emploi, à l'investissement et à la croissance, votre gouvernement prendra les mesures suivantes :

—Il honorera son engagement de réduire les impôts. Your government will honour its tax-cut pledge.

—Apply a new business impact test to proposed policies and regulations that might adversely affect competitiveness or jobs.

—Open the electricity market to help meet the province's long-term electricity needs, while ensuring a safe, reliable and affordable supply of power. Monopolies do not operate in the best interest of taxpayers. Open, competitive markets are more efficient and fair; they help keep costs low for consumers over the long term and they encourage innovation.

Additional measures to help remove barriers to jobs, growth and investment will be announced April 23.

The second step of the plan is to pay down the province's accumulated debt. The budget will outline the next steps.

The third step is renewed efforts to reduce the size and scope of government.

The government will sell businesses it should not operate and assets it should not own. The first in a series of privatizations will be announced in the budget.

Proposed legislation would mandate “sunset clauses” for new programs.

The government will apply the zero-based budgeting principle to ministries and agencies.

It will ensure that taxpayers' dollars intended for programs to help people are not diverted to lobbying and advocacy.

The government will strike a panel to make recommendations on the appropriate role of government in the 21st century: what its businesses should and shouldn't be; where it belongs and where it does not.

Step 4 is to streamline government and make it more efficient.

Step 5 is continued improvement in customer service and expansion of electronic government.

Details of these two steps will be announced April 23.

Remember, though, that efficiency and alternative service delivery are inadequate responses in areas where the government does not belong. Functions that government has no business providing should be eliminated.

Preparing for the new economy is the sixth step. Your government will make Ontario the preferred jurisdiction for those seeking to do business in the digital economy.

It will introduce broad privacy legislation that protects individuals and propels Ontario to the forefront of the information economy.

The government will introduce modern consumer protection laws that make Ontario a trusted destination for electronic consumer spending.

Some regions, including many rural communities, have not shared equally in recent growth and prosperity. A new approach and fresh ideas are needed.

Step 7 of the plan is to support economic growth in rural Ontario, the north and other regions of the province, and to encourage the growth of industries of special regional significance.

On May 7, the government will present its detailed plan for regional economic development.



The broad public sector, including all levels of government, consumes 37.7% of the province's gross domestic product.

As step 8 of its plan, your government will introduce sweeping reforms to ensure that all public sector institutions are accountable to the citizens of Ontario.

Proposed amendments to the Audit Act would empower the Provincial Auditor to ensure that institutions funded by Ontario taxpayers use that money prudently, effectively and as intended.

Legislation to cancel the OHIP billing numbers of providers convicted of health fraud will be introduced.

Running deficits is not sustainable and not acceptable. Your government, municipalities and school boards are now prohibited from running deficits. The budget will introduce measures that would require the entire public sector, including hospitals, to act in a fiscally responsible manner.

Further accountability reforms will be announced April 30.

1350

As Ontario's population and industries continue to grow, so will pressures on infrastructure.

Smart Growth is a vision that promotes and manages growth to sustain a strong economy, strong communities and a healthy environment.

The ninth step in the plan, Smart Growth, will help reduce gridlock, encourage the revitalization of abandoned or contaminated land and promote economic growth.

Details will be announced April 25.

Since 1995, the government has established provincial standards across the broad public sector. These changes were necessary to increase efficiency and accountability and to improve quality, but they should not result in expanded central bureaucracy or the imposition of one-size-fits-all solutions.

While economies of scale and common accountability standards promote excellence and efficiency, so do innovation, competition, flexibility and choice. All must coexist. Provincial standards should not eliminate local responsibility. Queen's Park can lead without centralized micromanagement and control.

For example, 4,746 schools and 74,895 classrooms cannot be run from the Ministry of Education. Excellence among teachers, leadership by principals and the influence of parents make the difference.

Step 10 of the plan is to give parents, principals and teachers the flexibility and choice to do what is best for students.

Proposed legislation would allow parents more choice to enrol their children in any available school within their system.

Circular 14, the list of ministry-approved learning materials, will be replaced with provincial guidelines that permit local flexibility. For example, principals may choose to use phonics texts to teach reading.

School boards will be encouraged to reward high-performing teachers and principals.

The government's role should be to lead and set standards. A rigorous curriculum, clear report cards and standardized testing were only the start.

Step 11 is for your government to continue setting standards of excellence for schools, with an emphasis on performance-based accountability. Only performance measurement and the reporting of results will equip parents and students to make informed choices.

The government will act to ensure that all students in Ontario have the benefit of co-instructional activities.

Step 12 of the plan is to support parents and ensure children get the best possible start in life. The Healthy Babies, Healthy Children initiative laid a necessary foundation. The Mustard-McCain report on early learning painted a bold vision.

Building on these initiatives, the government will establish a system of local early years centres, accessible to all children and families.

The government will continue to ensure that every willing and qualified Ontario student secures a place in a post-secondary education program—step 13 of the plan.

Step 14 is to address skills shortages—including among the trades—and ensure that Ontario boasts the skilled workforce necessary to attract investment and jobs.

The government intends to establish an innovative new post-secondary institution that would link education and skills training with the needs of the marketplace. Details will be announced in the budget.

Details of the government's commitment to children, education and training will be announced April 26.

Your government wants to ensure that all people have access to quality health care where and when they need it.

It will increase health care spending for the sixth consecutive year. Once again, this year, spending will rise faster than the economy grows.

However, double-digit increases in health spending are no longer sustainable.

In the absence of fundamental reform, increased funding is no answer to the national crisis facing the health care system.

To quote from the recent report of Saskatchewan's Commission on Medicare:

"Pouring more money into a system with known inefficiencies will not improve it.... More money for an often poorly functioning health care system often means less money for education, job creation and tax relief, all things that contribute to improving the health of the people of Saskatchewan. Thus, spending more on the current health care system without addressing its underlying problems would be irresponsible."

The Ontario government believes fundamental reform is necessary to save the nation's health care system. Il faudra procéder à une réforme fondamentale si l'on veut préserver le système de santé canadien.

Your government is prepared to lead the process of change. This is step 15 of its plan.



It wants an open, national discussion on the future of health care. The federal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada must be free to consider all aspects of the system and to explore all possible solutions. It should not be limited by a narrow mandate or by restrictions on discussion. Ontario wants to take part in a dialogue that is broad enough to identify real, lasting solutions to the sustainability crisis.

Among other things, this national dialogue should examine how medicare should be funded by the federal and provincial governments, having regard to historic contributions, the original 50-50 principle of medicare and the tax base available to each level of government. The goal should be a full partnership, with each level of government contributing a realistic and fair share of health care costs.

However, the federal commission will not report until November 2002. That is far too long to wait before acting to save medicare. On an urgent basis, the Ontario government will ask patients, nurses, doctors, hospital administrators and others with an interest in the future of the health system to identify needed reforms and to seek consensus on the best way to allocate the billions of dollars spent annually on health care.

In addition, as health care costs are projected to grow significantly everywhere, a federal-provincial agreement on funding the annual increases in health care costs cannot wait until November 2002.

At the same time it addresses the sustainability question, the government will accelerate reforms to improve the quality of Ontario's health care system—step 16 of its plan.

More details of the government's health care plan will be announced April 24.

By preserving Ontario's rugged beauty and protecting its rich natural resources, your government will help ensure that future generations inherit a clean and healthy province.

Step 17 is action to protect environmental health and safety. Here the government will be guided by the Managing the Environment report.

Details will be announced May 2.

On May 3, the government will announce details of step 18, which is to help people get off welfare and into jobs.

1400

Ontario is blessed with many safe communities where children play, neighbours watch out for one another and people work together to solve problems.

Step 19 of the plan is the introduction of further measures to enhance victims' rights and keep streets and communities safe from crime. Details will be released May 1.

Ontario is a diverse province. Not only is diversity cause for celebration, it offers a significant economic advantage.

Some in the community face special barriers, including those who live with physical or mental disabilities.

Ensuring equal opportunity for all is the 20th step of the plan.

The government will seek common ground and shared solutions to address the needs of persons with disabilities, and take action, including the introduction of legislation, to build on its commitment.

The 21st century demands that Ontario's democratic processes be modern and responsive.

The 21st step of the plan is support for parliamentary reform, particularly changes that enhance the role and responsibilities of MPPs.

The government will propose that more issues, particularly those requiring in-depth examination and considered recommendations, be referred to legislative committees.

The government continues to view only votes on the budget and identified confidence questions as matters of confidence, and encourages other parties to do the same.

It wants to restore the importance of the process by which MPPs hold the government accountable through review and approval of its spending estimates. To this end, the government will not view the reduction or rejection of any line item in a ministry's estimates as a matter of confidence.

It will propose that the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly explore other parliamentary reforms that would enhance the role of private members and expand the use of technology.

Today's commitments launch the action plan of 21 steps into the 21st century. Starting Monday, ministers will announce further details of these 21 steps.

Ontario extends far beyond Toronto. The business of this province takes place in every community, not just at Queen's Park.

Next week, the Premier will travel to each region of the province. He will speak to local residents, meet with community leaders and share details of this pro-growth, fiscally responsible, accountability-based action plan.

Members of the Legislative Assembly and citizens of Ontario:

The task ahead is not easy, but through courage and foresight and determination, Ontario shall continue to make progress. This province can establish the strongest economy and achieve the highest quality of life in North America.

*Que Dieu continue à bénir l'Ontario et le Canada.*

*May God continue to bless Ontario and Canada.*

*May God guide all in public office, that they may use power wisely and well.*

*God save the Queen.*

*Singing of O Canada.*

*Her Honour was then pleased to retire.*

*Prayers.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF MEMBER FOR PARRY SOUND-MUSKOKA

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment a vacancy has



occurred in the membership of the House by reason of the resignation of Ernie Eves, Esq, as a member for the electoral district of Parry Sound-Muskoka, effective Thursday, February 8, 2001.

I beg to inform the House that the Clerk has received from the chief election officer and laid upon the table a certificate of the by-election in the electoral district of Parry Sound-Muskoka.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):**

"Mr Claude DesRosiers  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Room 104, Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A2

"Dear Mr DesRosiers:

"A writ of election dated the 15th day of February 2001 was issued by the Honourable Lieutenant Governor of the province of Ontario and was addressed to John M. Boyd, returning officer for the electoral district of Parry Sound-Muskoka, for the election of a member to represent the said electoral district of Parry Sound-Muskoka in the Legislative Assembly of this province in the room of Ernie Eves, who since his election as representative of the said electoral district of Parry Sound-Muskoka has resigned his seat. This is to certify that, a poll having been granted and held in Parry Sound- on the 22nd day of March 2001, Norm Miller has been returned as duly elected, as appears by the return of the said writ of election dated the 31st day of March 2001, which is now lodged of record in my office.

"John L. Hollins  
Chief election officer  
Toronto, March 31, 2001."

1410

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Mr Speaker, I have the honour to present to you and to the House Norm Miller, the member-elect for the electoral district of Parry Sound-Muskoka, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims the right to take his seat.

**The Speaker:** Let the honourable member take his seat.

Our friends in the galleries and the members may also take their seats now.

I beg to inform the House that, to prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy of the speech from the throne, which I will now read.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### AN ACT TO PERPETUATE AN ANCIENT PARLIAMENTARY RIGHT

### LOI VISANT À PERPÉTUER UN ANCIEN DROIT PARLEMENTAIRE

Mr Harris moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 1, An Act to perpetuate an Ancient Parliamentary Right / Projet de loi 1, Loi visant à perpétuer un ancien droit parlementaire.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The Premier for a short statement.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Traditionally the first bill introduced in the Legislature concerns an initiative that has not been mentioned in the throne speech. The practice symbolizes the assembly's independence from the crown and it reflects the collective rights of all members to address the Legislature's own priorities before attending to other business. An Act to perpetuate an Ancient Parliamentary Right instills this long-standing custom.

Our government upholds this important tradition as a symbol of the rights of all members of the chamber, and I am confident that all members of the House would agree that the Bill 1 tradition is worth upholding to reconfirm the parliamentary custom and the accountability of the government and the cabinet to this Legislative Assembly.

## MOTIONS

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor to this House be taken into consideration Monday, April 23, 2001.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I move that the House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 pm on Monday.

*The House adjourned at 1415.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Arnott, Ted (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC)</b>	Nepean-Carleton	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Richesses naturelles
Bartolucci, Rick (L)	Sudbury	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
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Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	
Bountrogianni, Marie (L)	Hamilton Mountain	
Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Ottawa-Vanier	
Bradley, James J. (L)	St Catharines	
<b>Brown, Michael A. (L)</b>	Algoma-Manitoulin	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Bryant, Michael (L)	St Paul's	
Caplan, David (L)	Don Valley East / -Est	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
<b>Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC)</b>	Oakville	Speaker / Président
Christopherson, David (ND)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Toronto-Danforth	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
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Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Conway, Sean G. (L)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	
Cordiano, Joseph (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	
<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin (L)	Scarborough-Rouge River	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and government House leader / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Éducation et leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)</b>	Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC)</b>	Guelph-Wellington	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
<b>Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)</b>	Whitby-Ajax	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Galt, Doug (PC)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Gerretsen, John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	
Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	
Gill, Raminder (PC)	Bramalea-Gore- Malton-Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	
Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora-Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Parliamentary assistant to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au vice-premier ministre et ministre des Finances
<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John (PC)	Etobicoke North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)</b>	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham-Kent Essex	
<b>Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC)</b>	Erie-Lincoln	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs
<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)</b>	Burlington	Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC)</b>	Huron-Bruce	Minister without Portfolio (Health and Long-Term Care) / ministre sans portefeuille (Santé et Soins de longue durée)
<b>Johnson, Bert (PC)</b>	Perth-Middlesex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Kells, Morley (PC)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Parkdale-High Park	
<b>Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC)</b>	Oak Ridges	Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / -Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / -Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Lankin, Frances (ND)	Beaches-East York	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity-Spadina	
Marland, Margaret (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	
Martel, Shelley (ND)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Martin, Tony</b> (ND)	Sault Ste Marie	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Maves, Bart (PC)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mazzilli, Frank (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs
McGuinty, Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / -Sud	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLeod, Lyn (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough- Aldershot	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Molinari, Tina R. (PC)	Thornhill	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services and Minister responsible for Children / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires et ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Transports
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire au premier ministre
<b>Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan</b> (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Durham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	
Peters, Steve (L)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Phillips, Gerry (L)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Pupatello, Sandra (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b> (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b> (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / -Ouest	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Smitherman, George (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	
<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b> (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles



<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Spina, Joseph (PC)	Brampton Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b> (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General / adjoint parlementaire au solliciteur général
Tilson, David (PC)	Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général et ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b> (PC)	Markham	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
<b>Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC)	Don Valley West / -Ouest	Solicitor General / solliciteur général
Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire au président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Wood, Bob (PC)	London West / -Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services correctionnels
<b>Young, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC)	Willowdale	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Vaughan-King-Aurora	

## CONTENTS

Thursday 19 April 2001

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

The Lieutenant Governor..... 1

### FIRST READINGS

#### **An Act to perpetuate an Ancient Parliamentary Right, Bill 1,**

*Mr Harris*

Agreed to ..... 5

Mr Harris ..... 5

### MOTIONS

#### **Throne speech debate**

Mrs Ecker ..... 5

Agreed to ..... 5

### OTHER BUSINESS

#### **Introduction of member for Parry Sound-Muskoka**

The Speaker ..... 4

Mr Harris ..... 5

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 19 avril 2001

### DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

La lieutenante-gouverneure ..... 1

### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

#### **Loi visant à perpétuer un ancien droit parlementaire, projet de loi 1,**

*M. Harris*

Adoptée ..... 5

M. Harris..... 5



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Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
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Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 23 April 2001**

**Lundi 23 avril 2001**



**Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr**

**Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr**

**Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 April 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 avril 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### CHRIS HADFIELD

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I am pleased to rise and speak about a remarkable Sarnia native, astronaut Chris Hadfield, the first Canadian to walk in space. Sarnia-Lambton residents feel a special pride in his achievement, because Chris Hadfield was born in Sarnia and went to King George school.

Although Chris Hadfield left Sarnia around the age of 10, he comes back every year to visit. I have had the privilege of meeting Chris on a number of occasions.

Chris Hadfield has been considered a local hero for a long time, particularly after his first flight in 1995. He had been a household name in Sarnia long before the rest of Canada discovered who he is.

Today, if you fly to Sarnia, you fly into the Chris Hadfield Airport. Chris has taken the crest from the city of Sarnia with him into space.

In both my offices hang a photograph he took from space in 1995 of the Sarnia area. I understand he was going to try to take another photograph on Thursday at 4:15, as the shuttle went over the area.

Chris Hadfield is an example of achieving excellence and professionalism that makes him the best in the world. He has been an inspiration to many young people, and proven anything is attainable with a dream, good education, hard work and opportunity. The Sarnia-Lambton community and, I can safely say, the members of the Legislature wish Chris all the best and a safe return to earth.

#### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I'd like to draw the attention of all members of this Legislature to Ontario's recognition of Holocaust Memorial Day, which fell this year on April 19.

Images conjure up strong emotions. Images in the minds of Ontarians on Holocaust Memorial Day are likely predominated by the systematic destruction of European Jews associated with the Second World War. However, the minds of some Ontarians will be filled with images of the victims of genocide in Africa or the Balkans.

This is as it should be. Holocaust Memorial Day is a time to commemorate all victims of genocide and remind citizens of Ontario of the values of education and citizenship to make sure that we never allow ourselves to forget.

It is important to remember that genocide is only possible when large numbers of people abrogate their responsibilities as citizens and do nothing to stop hatred and intolerance.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations' convention on prevention and punishment of genocide recognize this. These documents recognize the civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights of all citizens. More and more people around the world understand that the right to life exists above national sovereignty.

I ask all members of this Legislature to remember that shedding light on these darkest of human actions is a reflection of our willingness to create a society that will defend all its parts. It is a lesson we must take care to never forget.

#### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I was shocked and saddened last Thursday by a throne speech that included no new programs for Ontario's children.

Last September, the federal government, as part of the federal health accord, gave Ontario \$844 million over five years for children's programs. Most provinces held consultations about new programs. Some have introduced programs such as new child care options or increased support for expectant mothers. This Tory government has never even acknowledged the transfer of money.

On April 1, the federal government transferred \$114 million to Ontario to establish new programs for children and families. The government has not consulted the people or announced what new programs it will establish with the money. All this government has done for children in Ontario in the last six months is collapse the Ontario ministry for children. After years of speeches pledging his commitment to children, in February Mike Harris moved the Children's Secretariat to the already overloaded Ministry of Community and Social Services.

I have repeatedly pressed the government to announce its plan for this money. It is time to move beyond the rhetoric. The Premier should be here today to account for how these federal dollars will be spent on children.

The Ontario Liberal Party believes it is time for the government to make families and children a part of its political agenda.

### ORGAN DONATION

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** With beautiful weather across southern Ontario, many Ontarians are spending more time outdoors anticipating the spring and summer months ahead. But for too many Canadians the hope and excitement that comes with the change in season is diminished by the sorrow and anguish that comes from waiting for organ transplant surgery.

Today marks the beginning of National Organ Donor Week, symbolized by the green ribbon.

My sister Patti, at the ripe old age of 40 years, is waiting for a new heart. She is one of 1,600 Ontarians currently on the waiting list for organ transplant surgery. Despite the success rate of organ transplant surgery, Canada has one of the lowest donor rates in the world. Here in Ontario, despite the number of individuals currently waiting for this surgery, only 406 actual donations from Ontario residents were made in all of the year 2000.

I encourage everyone in this House and across this province to sign an organ donor card or learn more about organ donation by calling your MPP or visiting [www.OrganDonationOntario.org](http://www.OrganDonationOntario.org). It is equally important that families take the time to discuss their wishes with each other to ensure that as many Canadians as possible can receive the gift of a better life.

My family and the hundreds of members of families of those who desperately need this gift of life thank every Canadian who has already signed their card.

Organ transplants save lives, maybe the life of someone you know and love. Each of us can be a hero and each of us can save lives by taking the first step and signing your own organ donation card.

### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I want to use my time today to make a direct plea to the Minister of Health regarding our serious health care concerns in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario.

As the physician shortage crisis worsens, particularly in Thunder Bay, it is absolutely imperative that the minister recognize that solutions, both long and short term, are being offered to him and it is clearly time for him to take action.

On a short-term basis, you must loosen the restrictions on qualified foreign-trained physicians who are eager to work in our communities. You have publicly acknowledged the absurdity of the present impasse, and I hope you will seek a solution to this on an urgent basis.

On a long-term basis, it has become increasingly clear that the establishment of a northern and rural medical school will bring many new physicians to the north. We

need your committed support to make this a reality, and I am calling on you today to make it happen. It's the right thing to do, not just for the north but for all the smaller communities in the province.

Speaking of what is right, I must make another heartfelt plea to the minister, and that is to recognize that the northern health travel grant program, as it is presently set up, is underfunded, bizarrely inflexible and in fact discriminatory.

You need to understand that northerners are absolutely offended by your government's extraordinary reluctance to fix or at least improve this program. You also need to understand that we will not give up the fight to see those improvements realized.

Minister, release your internal report, the one your predecessor has on her desk, and fix this long-neglected program. Northerners have waited long enough for fairness.

1340

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Government figures released at the beginning of April show that the shortage of doctors and specialists in the north has again gotten worse. There are 35 communities needing a record 120 doctors and 167 specialists—17 more family doctors and 45 more specialists than we needed in December 2000.

Despite this crisis, the government said nothing in the throne speech about what it plans to do. The government-OMA agreement has not provided one new idea to deal with the shortage, despite the commitment to do so in section 12 of the agreement. The northern retention initiative promised by this government last May to deal with the loss of doctors from northern hospitals has never materialized, and the government refuses to release the George report so that northerners will know what the expert panel had to say about the creation of an independent medical school in the north. In fact, New Democrats had to appeal to the Information and Privacy Commissioner last week to get a copy of the document because the Ministry of Health has never replied to our FOI request submitted February 19.

The media report that Mike Harris will be in Sudbury on Friday, on the same day a symposium on a northern medical school is being held. I hope the Premier will attend, and announce that his government will accept a proposal submitted by Lakehead and Laurentian universities to create an independent medical school in the north.

The government should take the present crisis and turn it into an opportunity: agree to use some of the \$65 million now spent to recruit and retain, and fund an independent northern medical school so we can train doctors where they are needed to work and live.

### SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** Today the province of Ontario moves forward with a bold new measure in community safety with the proclamation of Christopher's Law. Christopher's Law



establishes the first sex offender registry in Canada. With us in the gallery today are two residents of Brampton, Jim and Anna Stephenson, parents of Christopher, for whom the legislation was named. If you will please be recognized.

*Applause.*

**Mr Gill:** It is a great honour to have the Stephenson family here with us today.

Also in the gallery today is Peel regional police Inspector Len Favro, who was one of the lead investigators on Christopher's case; and OPP detective Staff Sergeant Charles Young, who will manage Ontario's sex offender registry. Thank you.

*Applause.*

**Mr Gill:** Since the tragic death of their son, the Stephensons have worked tirelessly with this government and other groups in bringing about mandatory registration for convicted sex offenders. They are dedicated advocates of victims' rights and have provided both the inspiration and the momentum that led to the launching of this registry.

With the proclamation of Christopher's Law today we are putting convicted sex offenders on notice. They must now register and provide local police services with critical information, including an updated address and photo. The introduction of our provincial registry gives police a crucial tool.

Unfortunately, the federal government has refused to implement a national sex offender registry, something that was a key recommendation of the 1993 Stephenson inquest. Our registry sets a benchmark in public safety for the federal government and other provinces.

On behalf of our government and my constituents, I express my gratitude to the Stephensons and all those who have worked hard to make the registry a reality. Thank you.

#### PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** One, two, three, Mr Speaker; it's easy as one, two, three. This is the 123rd day this House has sat since the last election. That means an average of six days a month that this House has sat since 1999, and the Premier doesn't even deign to attend question period today. If he's going to be here, we invite him to show up.

The Premier has the worst attendance of any Premier in the history of the post-war period. The Premier of Ontario has—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. Take a seat.

The member knows that by referring to people's attendance you're only going to get people barracking across from the other side. You cannot refer to people's attendance. I know it seems to be the official opposition's position to do that. If you continue, I'm going to name you and then that gentleman down there with the sword is going to throw you out. We are not going to put up with it. We are not going to start the first day with you getting up and breaking the rules so blatantly. If you do

that, the other side starts yelling and we degenerate into chaos. I'm not going to let it happen and I'm going to listen very closely, and if you do it again—this is your last warning—I'm going to name you.

Continue.

**Mr Duncan:** Mr Speaker, can you point out to me the standing order that says that?

**The Speaker:** We will get the appropriate one. In the meantime, you can continue. By the time you're done, we will have it.

**Mr Duncan:** I have reviewed the standing orders, and I was not able to find a standing order that said that.

**The Speaker:** It has been a precedent long through tradition. You know that, I know that, everybody in the House knows that, and that's the way it's going to be in here. If you refer to people's attendance in here, then I can assure you that you're going to get thrown out. We're not going to start up this session like we did last time. As most of you know, I'm pretty easygoing, so I let it go. Each of you pushed it a little bit further and a little bit further. We're going to start the first day; it's not going to happen. Continue.

**Mr Duncan:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: Just so I understand your ruling, you indicated that I could not refer to people who are in here and their attendance. Does that refer to—

**The Speaker:** It's based on precedent. You can't refer to people being here or not being here.

**Mr Duncan:** Is that just the people in here—

**The Speaker:** Don't continue on.

**Mr Duncan:** Is it all right for me to refer to the attendance of other Premiers?

**The Speaker:** No. You're not going to be able to go into what other Premiers did when they were here. If you want to finish your statement, there are 57 seconds left. You can continue.

**Mr Duncan:** The Prime Minister of Canada attends question period in the federal House 57% of the time, which I know is more than currently happens in this Legislature. Past Premiers, including Conservative Premiers, have attended question period more than 80% of the time.

We believe, on this side of the House, that question period is fundamental to responsible government and accountability. It was this government that spoke about accountability in the speech from the throne. I ask the question, how accountable is a government if its First Minister isn't able to be with us, for whatever reason? It's not as though we've been sitting since last week. We have now been off four months.

You haven't followed the standing orders. You are absolutely rejecting the principle of fundamental accountability and responsible government. You should all be ashamed of your Premier and his record.

#### CONESTOGA COLLEGE

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** Conestoga College has excelled yet again, emerging as Ontario's

best-rated college by the provincial government's performance standards.

I want to congratulate the college and their president, Dr John Tibbits, for their exceptional achievements.

Conestoga College is an impetus for growth in our riding of Waterloo-Wellington and the surrounding area. Staff and students there strive for better results, they achieve them and, in doing so, they boost Ontario's economy and quality of life.

From that tradition of improvement, Dr Tibbits has put forward a proposal to enhance the college by transforming it into a polytechnical institute, with degree-granting status.

Dr Tibbits provided me with the following facts that explain why Ontario needs this institute. First, the shortage of skilled labour is restricting economic development. Second, workers with more advanced skills are needed in Canada's technology triangle. Third, Conestoga has finished first of Ontario's 25 colleges for the past three consecutive years on the province's performance indicators. Fourth, rapid demographic and economic growth necessitate this next step. Finally, alongside three nationally ranked universities, there is a need for an institution that places a greater emphasis on applied learning that is market-driven and directed at economic development.

Dr Tibbits has submitted this proposal to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and I have written to the minister on his behalf and continue to extend my unqualified support for this initiative.

#### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that on Wednesday, January 10, 2001, the report of the Integrity Commissioner regarding the Honourable Michael D. Harris, Premier of Ontario, was tabled.

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment, the Clerk received the 17th report of the standing committee on government agencies.

#### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that on Wednesday, January 31, 2001, the report of the Integrity Commissioner regarding the Honourable Michael D. Harris, Premier of Ontario, was tabled.

#### REQUEST FOR REPORT OF INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that on February 16 a request by the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane pursuant to section 30 of the

Members' Integrity Act, 1994, to the Honourable Robert C. Rutherford, Integrity Commissioner, for an opinion on whether the Honourable Michael D. Harris, Premier of Ontario, had contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention was tabled.

#### APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a copy of an order in council made pursuant to subsection 23(6) of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, appointing the Honourable Gregory Evans as acting Integrity Commissioner, effective March 5, 2001, until a new Integrity Commissioner is appointed under subsection 23(2) of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, and revoking, as of March 5, 2001, order in council number OC 2070/97 dated November 19, 1997.

1350

#### ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Earlier today, the member for Windsor-St Clair, Mr Duncan, provided me with written notice of a point of privilege, as required under standing order 21(c). I'd like to thank the member for giving me sufficient time to carefully review the matter.

I wish to advise I will be deciding on this matter without further hearing directly from the member at this time, as standing order 21(d) permits me to do.

The issue the member raises has to do with the attendance by a member of the executive at the daily oral question period.

This House has never imposed an obligation upon members to attend all meetings of the Legislature. Indeed, the assembly is constitutionally competent to carry out the business with a quorum of 12 members. Additionally, the Speaker is not vested with authority to compel the attendance of any member.

As we all know, the many and varied duties of being an elected member of this House often legitimately demand our attendance elsewhere. Honourable members are assumed by their honourable colleagues to have a valid, defensible and justifiable reason for being absent from the House when it is meeting. This is one of the principal reasons why it is prohibited by our traditions and by our practices to draw the attention of the House to the absence of another member.

This convention is observed for good reason, and I will say that the tenor of the member's written submission itself is in conflict with the spirit of that tradition.

For all of the above reasons, I find the member has not made out a prima facie case of privilege.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: In respect and in deference to your ruling, this is a new point of privilege arising out of standing order 21(c). This is a matter that's arisen as a result of the proceedings in this House. I wonder if you'll



hear that point of privilege. It does not have to do with the attendance of any member.

**The Speaker:** I will as long as it arises out of what happened today, and then you do not need to give written advisement of it. So I will hear it.

**Mr Duncan:** It arises out of your response to me, and I'd like to address that. We anticipated that and I'd like to address it, if I may, outside of the context of the attendance of the Premier or any individual member of this House.

Standing order 21(a) defines privilege as "the rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the members of the House individually conferred by the Legislative Assembly"—

**The Speaker:** No. The honourable member, take his seat. There's nothing new in that. That's the same part of what I just ruled.

**Mr Duncan:** But you haven't heard the whole thing.

**The Speaker:** I heard exactly what it relates to, and it is no different than what you did. You can't take something and try to say it another way and make it out to be something different. I think I was very clear in the ruling. We're not going to get into situations where I make a ruling and then you get up and appeal the ruling by going a different route. There is nothing new in what you are suggesting to me. I think I was very clear in the ruling that I just gave here today.

**Mr Duncan:** If I may, Mr Speaker—

**The Speaker:** On another point of order?

**Mr Duncan:** Your ruling does not, in my view, reflect the writings or the precedent in the British House or the Ottawa House. We have a number of questions with respect to your ruling and to deny us the opportunity to seek—

**The Speaker:** Take a seat. You may have a number of questions, but there is no appeal of the ruling. You may not like the ruling. Often the government doesn't like the rulings on some things, but the ruling is final and it's very clear. I took a look at it. I read it, and I thank the member. It's very, very clear. What you're talking about is not a point of privilege, and there's no sense going through it by any other route. It is not a point of privilege. No matter how many times you get up, it's not going to be a point of privilege and you're wasting everybody's time by continuing.

## FIRST READINGS

### MINISTERIAL TRAVEL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'OBLIGATION DE RENDRE COMPTE DES VOYAGES MINISTÉRIELS

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act respecting Accountability for Ministerial Travel / Projet de loi 2, Loi concernant l'obligation de rendre compte des voyages ministériels.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This bill requires members of the Executive Council of Ontario—that is, the Premier and the cabinet—to submit to the Legislative Assembly or to the Clerk of the assembly information relating to any travel by the member on government business to areas outside the province of Ontario. The information must be submitted within 60 days of the member's return from outside the province.

Part of the information which will have to be submitted is a written summary of the purpose of the travel and of any accomplishments resulting from the travel, including a listing of all the benefits in terms of tangible investments and employment opportunities that the travel will bring to Ontario, a detailed statement of all expenses incurred by the member as well as by any staff accompanying the member, a listing of individuals and organizations contacted and with whom meetings were held and, finally, a detailed summary of the significant terms and conditions of any contract signed during the travel period.

I look forward to debate of this later on this week.

### SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'EAU POTABLE SAINTE

Ms Churley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to restore public confidence in the quality of drinking water in Ontario / Projet de loi 3, Loi visant à rétablir la confiance publique dans la qualité de l'eau potable en Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** This bill recognizes that people have the right to clean and safe drinking water, that clean and safe drinking water is a basic human entitlement and essential for the protection of human health.

This bill would do more than anything we've seen to date to prevent another Walkerton. With this bill, all drinking water quality tests, such as those showing E coli in Walkerton water as early as February last year, would have to be posted on an electronic water registry so everyone—municipal politicians, seniors' homes, hospitals, schools, the medical officer of health, the police—would have access to test results.

The bill also enshrines in law that anyone who uses a public water system in Ontario has the right to expect to

receive clean and safe drinking water from it, and delivers on that by requiring that summaries of test results must be mailed to every homeowner with their own water bill.

The government killed the Safe Drinking Water Act after second reading in the last session. Today I hope they will see fit to act differently and give this bill fast passage through first and second readings so we can get out in the public and have public hearings on this bill.

SAVING FOR OUR CHILDREN'S  
FUTURE ACT (INCOME TAX  
AMENDMENT), 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR L'ÉPARGNE  
EN PRÉVISION DE L'AVENIR  
DE NOS ENFANTS (MODIFICATION DE LA  
LOI DE L'IMPÔT SUR LE REVENU)

Mr Hastings moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide a tax credit for contributions to registered education savings plans / Projet de loi 4, Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu en vue de prévoir un crédit d'impôt pour les cotisations versées à un régime enregistré d'épargne-études.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** The Saving Our Children's Future Act establishes a tax credit for any individual who contributes to a registered education savings plan in the amount of 10% of the qualifying contribution, to a maximum of \$100 per beneficiary annually. The credit is limited to individuals with incomes of less than \$40,000 per year or families with incomes of less than \$80,000 per year. The bill provides that the credit will be a debt due to the crown and recoverable as if it were income tax if a beneficiary does not pursue post-secondary education in Ontario.

1400

AUDIT AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA VÉRIFICATION  
DES COMPTES PUBLICS

Mr Gerretsen moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to amend the Audit Act to insure greater accountability of hospitals, universities and colleges, municipalities and other organizations which receive grants or other transfer payments from the government or agencies of the Crown / Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la vérification des comptes publics afin d'assurer une responsabilité accrue de la part des hôpitaux, des universités et collèges, des municipalités et d'autres organisations qui reçoivent des sub-

ventions ou d'autres paiements de transfert du gouvernement ou d'organismes de la Couronne.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** This bill is similar to the bill I introduced in the last session, which the government didn't pass at that point in time. It takes the words right out of the throne speech in which the government states that it will make amendments to the Audit Act. Taking into account that it was first introduced by the Honourable Ernie Eves back in the 1996 budget, I'm sure that my colleagues across the aisle will agree that this bill should be given unanimous consent so that it can be given second and third reading here today. I ask that unanimous consent be given in order to give the bill second and third reading.

**The Speaker:** Unanimous consent? No. I heard some noes.

PROTECTION OF MINORS  
FROM SEXUALLY EXPLICIT  
GOODS AND SERVICES ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LA PROTECTION  
DES MINEURS CONTRE LES BIENS  
ET SERVICES SEXUELLEMENT  
EXPLICITES

Mr Wood moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to protect minors from exposure to sexually explicit goods and services / Projet de loi 6, Loi visant à protéger les mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** The purpose of this bill is to prevent those under 18 from being exposed to sexually explicit goods and services. It mandates the good practices already followed by most businesses in Ontario. If enacted, it would give a reasonable assurance to Ontario parents that their children will not be exposed to inappropriate influences of this nature. It is substantially the same as a bill I introduced in the last session of the Legislature.

PUBLIC SECTOR SALARY DISCLOSURE  
AMENDMENT ACT  
(FRIENDS ON THE TAKE), 2001

LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA DIVULGATION DES  
TRAITEMENTS DANS LE SECTEUR  
PUBLIC (FAVORITISME)

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:



Bill 7, An Act to amend the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 7, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur la divulgation des traitements dans le secteur public.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The purpose of the bill is to amend the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996, to require the public disclosure of all salaries and benefits paid in 2001 and later years to persons appointed to hold public office by the Lieutenant Governor in Council or by a minister of the crown.

## CANADIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'HYMNE NATIONAL DU CANADA

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act to provide for the singing of O Canada / Projet de loi 8, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative pour prévoir que soit chanté le Ô Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** This is a re-introduction of a simple bill that I introduced in the last session asking us as Canadians to stand up at least once a week and be proud to either participate in the playing or singing of O Canada in this Legislature. As you know, in the last Legislature, after repeated requests for this to be done, the government side blocked it on four or five occasions. It is really an attempt to do what the government has asked of the students of Ontario: to participate in honouring our national anthem in schools across this province.

I'm asking for the members to do what they tell children to do, and that is to respect the national anthem in this Legislature.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, April 23, 2001, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Just a minute. I'm in the middle of the vote. We'll have the point of order after.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1410 to 1415.*

**The Speaker:** Would the members take their seats, please.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Amott, Ted	Ecker, Janet	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Elliott, Brenda	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Flaherty, Jim	Parsons, Ernie
Bartolucci, Rick	Galt, Doug	Peters, Steve
Beaubien, Marcel	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bountroglanni, Marie	Gilchrist, Steve	Pupatello, Sandra
Boyer, Claudette	Gill, Raminder	Ramsay, David
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Runciman, Robert W.
Brown, Michael A.	Hardeman, Ernie	Ruprecht, Tony
Bryant, Michael	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Caplan, David	Hodgson, Chris	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Hoy, Pat	Snobelen, John
Clark, Brad	Hudak, Tim	Sterling, Norman W.
Cleary, John C.	Jackson, Cameron	Stewart, R. Gary
Clement, Tony	Johns, Helen	Stockwell, Chris
Coburn, Brian	Johnson, Bert	Tascona, Joseph N.
Colle, Mike	Kells, Morley	Tilson, David
Crozier, Bruce	Klees, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Cunningham, Dianne	Kwinter, Monte	Tumbull, David
Curling, Alvin	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Wettlaufer, Wayne
DeFaria, Carl	Levac, David	Wilson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mazzilli, Frank	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Wood, Bob
Duncan, Dwight	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Murdoch, Bill	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Komos, Peter	Martel, Shelley
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	
Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario	

**The Speaker:** I know we have a new seating arrangement. Some of the members might not be familiar. The member for Oshawa and the member for Brampton Centre were in the wrong seats. What we'll ask them to do—if they could just get in their proper seats, then we will recap their votes.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The surprising thing isn't that they were in the wrong seats; the surprising thing is that those at the table actually caught it.

All in favour may cast their votes.

### Ayes

Ouellette, Jerry J.	Spina, Joseph
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**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 76; the nays are 7.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

The government House leader.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

1420

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 1, 2, 3 and 4.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I would like to ask for unanimous consent to waive notice for the following motion regarding orders of the day.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I move, notwithstanding standing order 30(b), that routine proceedings continue past 4 pm today but not past 5 pm, and that orders of the day shall begin no later than 5 pm.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I seek unanimous consent from this House to observe a moment of silence in commemoration of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Memorial Day, to allow members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour the 6 million people, most of them Jewish men, women and children who were murdered during one of the darkest periods of human history, and to reflect on the follies of hatred and intolerance.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

Would all the members and our friends in the galleries please rise for a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you. You may take your seats.

#### TRIBUTES TO FORMER MEMBERS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I would like to ask for unanimous consent to pay respect to our friend and colleague, Al Palladini.

I would also like to ask at this time for unanimous consent to pay tribute to two former members of this

House, Ellen MacKinnon and Wilf Spooner. It is my understanding that each party will speak for five minutes about each of these individuals, following the usual rotation.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we do that, we have in the members' gallery west another of our former colleagues, the honourable George Kerr, who was the member for Burlington South for a number of years. Please join me in welcoming him.

#### AL PALLADINI

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** It is a great honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the Conservative caucus about a truly great Canadian, our colleague Al Palladini.

Al's story is truly representative of so many new Canadians. Through his hard work and faith in his own abilities, he raised himself from his humble beginnings to become an extremely successful businessman. But Al never forgot his earlier struggles, and I believe that's why Al never lost his appreciation for all people. He never forgot that it's not what you have, but it's the person you are that really counts.

I also believe, because of his humble background, that he always had his feet firmly on the ground. Anyone who knew Al knew that he never had an overblown sense of his own importance. In fact, it was quite the opposite with Al. I remember Al speaking to me in amazement several times on how a poor Italian immigrant like himself could rise to be elected as an MPP and then be appointed a cabinet minister and become a friend of the Premier.

Talking to Al was really always good for your soul. He also reminded you of purpose and principle and humility. As an MPP, I must say, he served his riding of York Centre with honour and dedication and rightfully had the respect of his constituents.

As the Minister of Transportation, Al presided over huge investments by the government into roads. And who can forget his infectious smile as he personally filled in potholes on highways? By the force of his own personality, Al was always able to bring together all kinds of different people and get consensus where others could not. He gained the respect of industry, of other government levels and of labour as well.

Al loved his job. Al never stopped working. I remember once hitching a ride with Al Palladini on the way to Ottawa and, unlike other people who were in cars, Al would be writing down violations of truckers and car drivers out there on the highway and they would really stop.

As the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, Al was in a role he was born for. Al was a



supersalesman. He promoted economic growth and jobs and investment in Ontario and he was wildly successful. He gained respect, again, from the corporate sector, from diplomats, from everyone. We all know that Al would never hesitate to intervene when he thought it was really important for him to get his personal intervention into something, whether it was with truckers who were threatening to strike or companies that might have been threatening to fold.

But I didn't want to speak just about Al, the successful businessman or successful politician. I wanted to talk a little bit about Al Palladini, the person.

We are joined today by Al's son Franco, who is in the gallery with us today. Franco, you know that Al was very proud of you. I can't remember a time at any event where he introduced you that he wasn't proud of you; he was so proud of the man you had become.

The world knew that Al was generous to a fault. I could name thousands of charities that Al helped, but just a couple of them were the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Humber River Regional Hospital. To my knowledge, there wasn't a good cause that Al Palladini did not like. This was evidenced by the number of organizations and people who came to Al's funeral to pay their respects.

I believe the quality about Al that is most outstanding is that Al was a friend to many people. Al continually asked his friends to join him for a "bowl of pasta," as he used to say. But being Al's friend was not without its hazards and risks, because Al would always get us involved with things. We trusted Al so much that we never questioned the details. When he asked us to help him out, it was generally Norm Sterling, John Snobelen, Al Leach, the Premier or myself who got involved with some of Al's schemes. Al invited Norm and myself to help him launch Tourism Week a couple of years ago and we got skunked; we were trying to fish in Lake Ontario and we got skunked. We took our picture with an oven mitt that looked like a fish. That was Al Palladini: he always found a solution for something.

Al's favourite story was when the Premier called to offer him the position of Minister of Transportation. Al's response was, "I think you've got the wrong Al. You must mean Al Leach." And that was Al.

There is truly a void in the Legislature and in our hearts today because Al Palladini is no longer with us. I have in my office a photograph of Al and myself. Al signed it, "Amici sempre"—friends forever. In the end, it wasn't a heart attack that caused Al's death; it was because his heart had become too big for his body, and we and the people of Ontario are poorer for his loss.

1430

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I am pleased, on behalf of the Liberal caucus and my leader, Dalton McGuinty, to say a few words about our pal Al.

I smiled to myself when I knew I would have a chance to say a few words about Al. My great memory is looking across at Al, in that chair over there, with a smile on his face that lit up this room, and he never lost it. That

was Al's trademark, to me. Regardless of how tough things were—and we try to make them as difficult for the government as possible—Al never lost his smile and his sense of humour. You appreciate this in opposition. Al was always very friendly to us in opposition.

Sometimes we get into the to and fro here in the Legislature and start to take things personally; all of us do in some respect. I try to remind myself not to, but we do. Al didn't. You would go to an event with Al, and Al was there representing the government very well. But Al always set aside political differences and had a personal friendship with all of us in opposition.

He had an amazing ability to maintain his candour and spontaneity, because this place knocks it out of you. I think many of us recall that when Al was first in cabinet, he said some things that were interesting and true but seemed to be somewhat inappropriate, about "I can't give up my limousine," and whatnot. That would knock the candour out of a lot of people. Al never lost it. Many of us lose that; we are so guarded in our comments. But Al, to his credit, kept his candour and spontaneity right to the end—I don't know how he did it.

He truly is a model of achievement. Think of an individual who came to this country at 10 and built up that dealership—enormously successful—but also contributed so much to community life and then moved on to this area. He is a model of achievement for all of us. To accomplish all that in his very short life is something for all of us, and particularly for people who are new to this country—to realize that somebody from age 10 can accomplish all of that has to be a terrific role model.

He was a risk-taker. Al was bigger than life to me. Everybody in this room, at least everybody in the Toronto area, knew Al Palladini from his commercials before he got here, and they were always a bit on the risk. But even coming into politics was a risk. Al gave up a hugely successful business. Luckily he had a supportive family who were working on it, but he took that big risk because he wanted to serve Ontario and Canada.

Another lesson for me was that he kept things in perspective. I find that in this business you can lose perspective. One of the most telling things about Al was that every night at 9 o'clock he would phone his mother. We can all learn from that. When we all think back on our political careers, there is a risk that we give up the important things. As Dave Tsubouchi said, he always spoke proudly of his son, who is here with us today.

He also was able, for some reason, to keep his community activities up, while he was a busy cabinet minister, to make sure he never lost sight of his community activities. Again, many of us, if we reflect on it, give up that important part of our lives. Al never did. He did some terrific work in charity. Mr Tsubouchi mentioned the Heart and Stroke Foundation, which in hindsight was rather ironic, but also the Canadian Italian Business and Professional Association, the chamber of commerce and whatnot.

We miss Al. I miss Al. He was one of the unique individuals, as I say: his smile, his sense of humour, his

eternal optimism, his ability to set aside political differences and maintain friendships.

As the Premier, I think, said at the funeral, Al also had a love of golf, which some of us share with Al. But somewhere right now, as the Premier said, he is teeing it up on the back nine, hopefully recognizing that all of us have some things we can learn from Al. I hope he is in the red numbers on the back nine.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I join with all members of the assembly in remembering the contribution of Al Palladini to this Legislature and to the people of Ontario.

I think I can safely say that all of us will miss the member from Vaughan-King-Aurora, because he was the kind of person who always made his presence felt. He had a smile and a handshake for everyone he met, regardless of their political stripe or their economic circumstances.

In fact, Al Palladini knew what it was like to make one's way in life. As many have remarked, he was an Italian immigrant who built a successful car dealership from the ground up. In business, as in politics, he was a charismatic and engaging personality and someone who traded on his sense of humour and good nature to get the job done.

I can remember when he was first sworn in as Minister of Transportation and he made the comment that we no longer needed emergency vehicles patrolling some of our highways, that if people had an emergency they could use their cell phones. Some of us on this side of the House who still don't have cell phones pointed out to him that cell phones don't work everywhere in Ontario. After question period—and I was one of the people who gave him the hardest time about that—he came up to me and said, “Is it true that cell phones don't operate everywhere in Ontario?” I said, “Yes,” and in typical Al Palladini fashion he said, “Well then somebody ought to get into the business.”

That was Al Palladini. In a few seconds that expressed his personality, his outlook and his enthusiasm. Al brought all of those qualities to Queen's Park, and I'm sure all members of this Legislature appreciated his work ethic and his desire to make Ontario a better place to live.

His political success I understand never distracted him from the important things in his life: his community and his family. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for sharing him with us. I know that I speak for all the members of the assembly when I say that Al Palladini will be missed.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I will make sure those kind comments do get sent to the members of the Palladini family.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, we will now start the rotation for the other members.

ELLEN MacKINNON

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Speaker, Ellen MacKinnon, a former member of the NDP

caucus, passed away over the past few months. I want to say a few words about the first woman MPP to represent Lambton county, who was also a school board trustee, a town councillor, a mother of seven and a grandmother while she served here in this Legislature.

Ellen MacKinnon approached every challenge with flair and vitality, and she never backed down from a challenge. Her sense of right and wrong was deeply rooted and she didn't waiver in the face of sometimes very public attacks against her personally. For example, she refused to back down from her commitment to same-sex benefits even after receiving an anonymous death threat.

Ellen struggled tirelessly in the fight for fairness for all Ontarians, and she wore many hats through her working life. She was a farmer, a bus driver, a waitress, a child care worker, a teacher, and she dedicated her life to the advancement of women's equality in her own special way. Her son Thom once said that she didn't just open the door for women, she kicked it in. Ellen faced one of her greatest personal tragedies during her tenure as an MPP, and many members of the Legislature will remember the moving statement she made here in 1992, thanking members for their support after her 35-year-old daughter died of cancer.

Former Premier Bob Rae remembered her as a force to be reckoned with in the caucus. Still, Ellen approached public life with a great sense of fun. All who knew her were inspired by her great sense of humour. Her family remained the most important thing in Ellen's life and she chose not to seek re-election in 1995, to spend more time with them.

I refer to the words of another great Canadian socialist William Irvine where he said, “I will not acquiesce to that which is. If it must be, I meet it with rebellion. With passion, love and life destroyed, my soul shall stand upon the wreck and challenge all.” I think that describes Ellen MacKinnon to a T.

1440

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):**

It's a pleasure for me to speak on behalf of our caucus today about the life of Ellen MacKinnon. There's no doubt that some of my comments are going to echo some of the third party leader's comments.

As we all know, Ellen passed away on February 13 this year at the age of 74. Ellen was first elected to the provincial Legislature in 1990 as the member for Lambton. Not only was she the first female representative for the riding of Lambton, but apparently she was the first woman to celebrate her 65th birthday in this House.

Ellen wore many hats during her lifetime. She was the mother of seven children, but besides that she helped raise four children on behalf of her sister. I first met Ellen in the late 1970s, when she was first elected to municipal council for the township of Plympton. I must admit that even though our ideologies, our philosophies in life sometimes differed and were not running parallel to each other at all times, Ellen had respect for my ideals and certainly I had respect for hers. We could always call



each other by first or last name, and it was always with the utmost respect. She was also elected to the Lambton school board in 1988 and 1990.

Ellen certainly liked to have a good time. I know that some people in this House knew Ellen better than I did, but I think I can speak fairly reasonably and wisely when I say that Ellen liked to have a good time, and she was not always the quietest person at all times.

As the leader of the third party mentioned, she was not immune to personal tragedy. She did lose a daughter to cancer at the age of 35.

I quote from an article about her that appeared in the local newspaper: "At one point in her life she thought she would never have time to be anything but a mother. But her resumé reads like a help-wanted column. She's been a farmer, registered nursing assistant, bus driver, waitress, babysitter, cook, school board trustee, teacher, cake decorator and municipal councillor." That's a varied career.

What about politics? Here's what she said about herself when she was acclaimed to the Plympton township council: "She went to the township office, filed the papers and 24 hours later was acclaimed. 'It was a good thing I didn't have to campaign, because I didn't know how.'"

What about politics? In closing I would like to make a comment about politics. I think her son Thom probably made the best comment, and who is better qualified than her son to make the following comment: "'I've always been proud of my mom,' says Thom. 'We always knew our mother would always be there for us, that she could juggle everything. My mother didn't just open the door for women, she kicked it in.'"

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On behalf of the Liberal caucus, it's an honour for me to pay tribute to the late Ellen MacKinnon, who served her constituents in Lambton with a good deal of distinction, with a lot of concern for their individual problems.

In 1990 a number of new faces were elected to the Legislature, and it was a time of major turmoil in terms of one government leaving office and another coming into office. You looked around the Legislature and indeed many of the people were people we did not recognize from years gone by.

She was a person I can always remember with a smile on her face, a very cordial person, a very courteous person. I guess one of the things you recognized, and Marcel would know this from his area and his relationship with her, was that she was totally unpretentious. In politics, ego tends to be part of it. We are feted by others, we see our names in the newspaper and we gain some respect by virtue of the position we have. That was something you never noticed in Ellen MacKinnon. She was always a very genuine person. She was a person you would think would have walked from her house into this Legislature, at any time during the five years she was here, never having changed as a person, being a genuine personality.

She was elected at an age when most people are thinking about retiring from politics. Yet she was prepared to come into the Legislature, having served, as we know, in Plympton township and on the Lambton county public board of education, two rather onerous positions, when you think of it, in terms of your relationship with the local people, because they are at you there, you are with them on a daily basis, and then coming to the Legislature at the age of 64, the first woman from Lambton riding. Even though today we see more women from rural ridings in this province, at one time it wasn't all that common to see women emerging from rural ridings. She was able to do so and obviously gained the affection of people in her constituency.

She was also a member of the board of directors of what today we would call the Association for Community Living, again reaching out to a group of individuals in our society who require the intervention and assistance of others. Certainly that was again an indication of the generosity of her spirit and heart.

It is mentioned in many of the stories about her that she came from the school of hard knocks. There are people from a certain era who didn't have the opportunity to get a formal education. Ellen had to quit school when she completed grade 8. She worked during wartime in the factories, as many women had to in wartime. She had a number of jobs, and we've mentioned them, not all of them glamorous, but certainly important jobs and ones which allowed her to assist in providing for her family.

What was quite remarkable as well was that while she had seven children, she raised those children to a very large extent during a period of time when she was in fact a widow—it must have been a difficult struggle—as well as helping with the raising of four other children of one of her sisters and caring for her mother-in-law who was disabled because of illness. She had to balance all of that eventually with being a member of the Legislature.

I remember that she was sitting in a seat just behind where Chris Stockwell is right now, and it was a night session, I believe. Sometimes in jest we make comments back and forth to one another, and Ellen's eyes were beginning to close on that evening. People thought, "Isn't this something of amusement." Then you find out, of course, what she was going through at that time. At that time her daughter was dying of cancer, so she was up half the night worrying about that, and going back to the constituency, worrying about all the matters she had to as a member of the Legislature. So when she stood in the House to thank members of the Legislature for their sympathy, it was truly one of the moving movements that you would see in this Legislature. Because this is a partisan place, she was genuinely surprised by the multi-partisan sympathy which was extended to her when many found out that she was carrying this personal load. She didn't reveal that; she didn't wear that on her sleeve for members of the Legislature. A lot of people didn't know that was the case, and that's often the case in this assembly, that people have burdens they do not share with others but nevertheless have them while they're doing their job.

She was a person who probably reflected her constituency more than most in an assembly of this kind: as I say, a very down-to-earth, average person within the constituency who could reflect the viewpoint of people who resided in Lambton. In politics there's what we call spin or public relations, often an artificial barrier between those of us who serve in public office and the public. That often happens out there. But with Ellen MacKinnon, what you saw was what you got: a very genuine person, a very warm person, a very affectionate person, a person with a concern for her constituents and for her family.

So to her family and to her friends, we offer today our condolences. But as important as those condolences, we offer our appreciation for sharing Ellen MacKinnon with members of this House and with the people of Ontario.

1450

### WILF SPOONER

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** It's my honour to pay tribute to a former member of this Legislature, a member who was here from 1957 to 1968. Joseph Wilfrid Spooner, better known as Wilf Spooner, or known as Mr Northern Ontario, passed away recently at the age of 91.

I didn't know Wilf very well; I met him a few times. I guess it's somewhat fitting that George Kerr, one of his colleagues in this Legislature, is here with us today. I only wish I had had an opportunity to talk to George about Wilf prior to making these remarks. I'm certain he would have had a number of remarks to make about him.

Wilf Spooner was a very, very powerful figure in his time for northern Ontario. Wilf Spooner served in the cabinet in three different portfolios. He was the Minister of Mines, and mining was very significant and still is very significant in the Timmins area. Cochrane South was the riding he represented. He was born and raised and always lived in northern Ontario and always felt himself to be a northern Ontarian. He took the plight of the mining community and, even before he was a member of this Legislature, worked to improve the working conditions of miners and also to improve the situation for miners who suffered as a result of their work.

Mr Spooner served as the minister of what is now the Ministry of Natural Resources and saw a huge increase in the number of provincial parks during his time, which I believe was over the cusp of the 1960s.

From 1962 to 1968 he served as the Minister of Municipal Affairs. During that period of time he undertook and started, I guess, the whole roll toward the reassessment of the province, which was in a very fractured state. Now that we can look retrospectively at property assessment, I can only imagine what the hurdle was for Mr Spooner to climb over, in terms of trying to bring in the concept of market value assessment, when in fact we have only achieved that some 35 years later, in terms of completing the task, because of the tremendous political hurdles to get over.

He was also with the Robarts government at that period of time when they went through the first amalgamation of what is now the city of Toronto, creating the six boroughs across the city of Toronto.

Before he came into provincial politics, he served as a councillor and then became the mayor of Timmins. He progressed all the way through the process to then retiring in 1968 from being a member of the Legislature, after which he continued to serve on several boards. The most noteworthy was as president of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission from 1982 to as recently as 1989.

Wilf Spooner went through high school and then went immediately to work, dealing in a number of different businesses. He rose from what were very humble beginnings, not unlike our friend Mr Palladini, whom we were talking about, and came from a situation where his parents didn't have a great deal to offer him as a leg up. Wilf Spooner came from this humble background, worked hard, gained the trust of his community, gave a huge amount to this province and is a man who should be remembered as a great, great benefit to Ontario but more particularly to northern Ontario.

Wilf Spooner's life is a life to celebrate, and we should thank his family, with whom we express our deepest regrets at this time, for sharing so much of Wilf Spooner with the people of Ontario and with his community.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** I'm very honoured, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, to stand in my place today to honour a fellow northerner.

I was very aware, as all northerners were, of the tremendous contribution Wilf Spooner had made as mayor of Timmins and as an activist in the city of Timmins, and then as the member for Cochrane South, as the riding was known back in the 1950s and 1960s.

When I was first elected to this House in 1985, it was the time, as Norm Sterling has just said, that Mr Spooner served as the chair of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, an appointment Premier Bill Davis had made in 1978.

As a person who had just turned 37 upon being first elected, now dealing with Mr Spooner, who was then 75 and a legend of our time, I, like others in this Legislature, was in awe of this person. In fact, he took that job so seriously, I'd say that was the heyday of that transportation commission. He really understood, as a former member of government and as a northerner, the importance of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. He oversaw the introduction of air service to many of our small communities at that time.

I remember quite fondly my colleague Michael Brown, the member from Algoma, and I being invited by Mr Spooner to come down to the Toronto harbour to the inauguration of a second car ferry service from Tobermory to Manitoulin Island. This ferry—the ONTC had purchased it from Finland, I believe—had just completed its ocean passage and had come into Toronto. Members



of the Legislature were invited to christen this boat and send it on its way to Manitoulin Island.

He was a true Progressive Conservative member in northern Ontario. He worked at establishing the first playground in the city of Timmins. He set up the prototype of our health units today as he established the first one in Timmins that was jointly funded by the province and by the local municipality. He was a visionary. He was a pioneer. He was a leader among the people of northern Ontario. He's going to be sadly missed.

On behalf of the members of the Liberal caucus, I wish to express our condolences to his family.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** It's as both a New Democrat and also as the former member for Cochrane South, now the Timmins-James Bay riding, that I rise today.

As a person growing up in Timmins, I knew Wilf fairly well as a very colourful individual who always filled the room whenever he walked in and somebody people looked up to. No matter what your political stripe, whether you were a New Democrat or a Liberal, when Wilf was around there was a great amount of respect. I think most people recognized the abilities Wilf brought to politics at both the municipal and provincial level.

What we also respected quite a lot was that Wilf was one of that rare breed of politician who, yes, was a proud Conservative but who also understood that he represented a larger constituency made up of New Democrats and Liberals, and he always had the time to deal with people no matter what their issues were.

I cut my teeth in politics on the issue of mining. I worked underground in the gold mines in the Timmins area and knew first-hand the kinds of working conditions when it came to the industrial diseases that miners can contract from breathing in diesel fumes and silicotic nodules and all the other carcinogens we find underground.

A lot of people never gave Wilf credit for some of the things he did. I want to raise this particular issue. The 1950s was when we were starting to notice that there were an awful lot of dead miners. A lot of miners who worked in the Kirkland Lake area, the Timmins area, Red Lake, Balmertown and across Ontario, and I would argue across Canada, were dying at an alarming rate and at a very young age. A lot of widows and children without fathers were left in—as we called them—the Kirkland Lake camp and the Porcupine camp.

Wilf, on municipal council, where he was first a councillor, then as the mayor of the city of Timmins and eventually when he became Minister of Mines, was one of the people who was instrumental in setting up some of the building blocks that allowed us to deal with that issue over the longer term. He established, for the first time in Ontario, a chest X-ray clinic system in this province, something, unfortunately, that we don't have any more but certainly something that led toward being able to pick up the evidence we needed to determine what the problem was.

As well, Wilf didn't stop at just saying, "Let's set up a chest X-ray clinic to determine what happened to these

miners." He wanted to get to the root of it. He worked within the industry to try to get them to clean up their act, because there was a fair amount of resistance in the mining communities of the 1950s to spending the kind of money they had to deal with dust counts underground. As a result of the work Wilf did and the determination he had as the member for Cochrane South, as a representative of miners and also as a Conservative serving in the Robarts government, he was able to bring his influence and knowledge first-hand to the government of the day to start the changes that eventually much changed the underground we have today. It's certainly still not the safest place, but we have gone a long way because of the work Wilf did.

1500

I don't know his son, Gerald, very well—I only met him a couple of times—but I can say that Gerald continued in his father's footsteps and is now in Chalk River working in the same type of business, as an insurance broker. I had the opportunity just earlier to speak to Sister Sheila Anne, who is Wilf and Toots's daughter. She shared something with me that I think needs to be said.

Many of us in this House will know that as we come to politics, we're always very proud to take credit for things we have accomplished, whether as Premier or cabinet minister, as member of a riding or as opposition critic. Wilf was a very different kind of politician. He wasn't very big on blowing his own horn. One of the things I heard at the eulogy when I attended the church services in Timmins and when I talked to Sister Sheila Anne was that Wilf was a very shy, quiet individual who didn't toot his horn very much. That was one of the things that was really apparent, that there were many people whose lives had been touched by individual acts Wilf had done, but not a lot of people knew about it because Wilf was the type of guy who didn't toot his horn when it came to letting people know what he had accomplished.

One of the things his daughter was very proud to share with me today was that at one point a constituent in the city of Timmins went to Wilf and said, "We need to establish a blood test for mothers just recently pregnant, to screen for PKU," a test to determine a particular illness that could be passed on to the child. Wilf had been convinced by this particular individual that it was the right thing to do, so he went to the Legislature, spoke to the Premier, spoke to the Minister of Health and was able to institute that particular test, and it still exists today.

I think it says a lot about Wilf that he was known as Mr Northern Ontario and as Mr Timmins, because he was the type of individual who understood what his responsibilities were and wore elected office with a great amount of pride.

I would only say this in the end: Wilf, I have to say, was a proud Rotarian. What always struck me whenever I showed up at the Rotary for any of their events was that one of the things Wilf was proudest of was his work with the Rotary Club of Timmins and being one of the charter members. The Rotarians have it right in their saying, and

I think it applies to Wilf: "Service Above Self." Wilf certainly knew the meaning of that.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Again, I thank all members for their comments. I will ensure that copies of Hansard get sent to all the families.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** This Legislature passed the Energy Competition Act in 1998 to help meet the province's long-term electricity needs and ensure that Ontarians have a safe, reliable and affordable supply of power.

When this government came to office in 1995, we had our work cut out for us. Ontario's electricity sector was failing us. Consumers and businesses had no choice of who supplied them with power, and we went from having one of the lowest prices for electricity to the third-highest in Canada.

The monopoly we had come to rely on for safe, reliable and competitively priced electricity was no longer working. It had become out-of-date, inefficient and too expensive. Something had to be done. That's why I'm proud to stand up in the Legislature today to announce that the government is confident that the conditions necessary to open the electricity market to competition will exist by May 2002. The government is committed to an open market, while guaranteeing a safe, affordable and reliable supply.

There are some who are fundamentally opposed to opening this market to competition. Our government believes, however, that open, competitive markets are beneficial. They keep costs low, encourage innovation and benefit consumers.

There are others who share our desire to open the market, but would like to see it done even sooner. As government, we bear a responsibility to ensure the opening is done right for all involved. To do this, we're committed to opening the market at the earliest possible date, while ensuring that all the conditions required for a smooth transition to competition are met.

I'm pleased to tell you that the four principles guiding the government's vision have been or will be met by May 2002.

The first and foremost principle is protecting consumers and offering more choice. The overall market design and regulatory framework for introducing competition puts consumers first. Over the long term, a competitive market will lead to the lowest possible costs and better service for all.

The second principle is creating a strong business climate with a reliable supply of electricity. Ontario already has sufficient supply to meet our current needs. Announcing a firm market opening deadline today

provides greater certainty to potential new investors who have already announced \$3 billion in new generation projects.

Third, we will protect our environment. My colleague the Minister of the Environment has announced tough new emission caps for the electricity sector. They will be among the toughest in North America, matching the requirements of the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Also today, Minister Witmer is announcing changes to ensure that new electricity projects are reviewed in a clear and consistent manner under the province's environmental assessment process.

The fourth principle: we will encourage new ways of doing business and support the search for alternative sources of power. For the first time, customers will be able to make clean air a priority by choosing the type of power they want, including wind, fuel cells and solar. Giving people choice will help promote the demand for cleaner, greener energy.

I'm proud to announce that Ontario's electricity sector will be open by May 2002. The government is keeping its promise to introduce a competitive electricity market. We will do it, and we have put the principles in place to ensure that we do it right.

### RED TAPE COMMISSION

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** Red tape hurts our businesses. It hurts job creation. Through the government's Red Tape Commission we have already eliminated hundreds of unnecessary regulations, but there is more to do. The Red Tape Commission will be doing just that with renewed vigour under the leadership of MPP Steve Gilchrist and Frank Sheehan.

According to Statistics Canada, most new jobs are created by small business. Policies and restrictions that hurt small business also hurt jobs. The Red Tape Commission will consult on barriers to small business growth and make recommendations for legislative reform. It will focus on actively seeking advice from small and medium-sized businesses. It's estimated that many small businesses spend six hours a week on government paperwork—time that could be put to better use creating jobs.

The Red Tape Commission is developing a business impact test for all new regulations proposed by the government. It will ensure that decision-makers consider the economic viability of any new regulation. The business impact test will prevent the formation of new layers of bureaucracy or red tape.

### ONTARIO YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP STRATEGY

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** On another front, we all know that Ontario's economy is driven by the success of



our entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs and the spirit of innovation are vital to Ontario's continued economic growth. To help create new jobs and opportunities for our youth, our government will launch an Ontario youth entrepreneurship strategy. We want the young people of Ontario to learn that building their own business is a viable and desirable career option. The young entrepreneurs program includes an improved loan program for youth to set up their own businesses. There is an entrepreneurship teaching program for grades 7 and 8, and also public outreach.

Another key element is Summer Company. It will assist students to start their own businesses this summer through a competitive process. Student entrepreneurs will be selected and matched with mentors—these are business leaders from their community—and more details will be announced very shortly.

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** As shown in our speech from the throne, our government is committed to an agenda of growth, accountability and fiscal responsibility, one that protects jobs, keeps families secure and strengthens Ontario.

We are taking action to ensure that the 11 million residents of our province enjoy the best-performing economy, with the highest quality of life.

Business people in Ontario want to create jobs, not fill out needless paperwork. We are committed to reducing red tape, and that job is never over. I am pleased to say that to date, we have: created for small businesses a short-form corporations' tax return, reducing it from a complicated and cumbersome 16 pages to just four pages; eliminated employer health tax instalments for companies with payrolls that are \$600,000 or less—in addition, self-employed individuals no longer have to pay this tax at all; reduced the number of retail sales tax returns being filed by small vendors; and created a fax-on-demand information system, providing detailed information about retail sales tax compliance and remittance guidelines.

Ontario's small business people shouldn't have to waste time trying to decipher complicated tax forms. This is why my colleague the Minister of Finance will announce that the government will review ways of simplifying tax administration procedures for small businesses, with a goal of implementing changes by 2002.

In the upcoming provincial budget on May 9, additional measures will be introduced to ensure that our province stays the course.

In addition to reducing taxes, our action plan promotes opportunity, cuts needless regulation and makes us more efficient.

In particular, we want to make sure that organizations creating jobs and investment opportunities for people in Ontario obtain the necessary assistance from the government without duplication or red tape.

### 1510

This is why I am pleased to announce today that the government will evaluate and streamline its grant programs to ensure they capitalize on joint opportunities for job creation and minimize duplication and bureaucracy.

Our goal is to be the best public service in the world. Anyone who calls a government office, sends in a letter, or walks into an Ontario government office should be served in a timely and efficient manner and by a courteous and helpful employee. Performance against these standards has and will continue to be measured.

In a recent survey measuring more than 7,000 contacts made by phone, mail or in person, we showed considerable progress in improving service in just one year. We are committed to doing better and expect our dedicated staff will continue to build on improvements in serving our public.

Building a quality organization is an ongoing and critical task. Today I am pleased to announce that the government will measure its own performance, including that of its senior management, based on service delivery and customer satisfaction. Customer service standards will include timely resolution of complaints and prompt service to citizens who write, phone or visit Ontario government offices.

To further improve our service to the public, we are also committed to becoming a world leader in delivering services electronically by 2003. We are building a better government by improving the way in which we do business. We are in fact transforming the public service in Ontario for the 21st century with the smart use of technology. We have major new initiatives underway in health, social services, resource management, transportation and justice to improve the lives of Ontarians. The actions that my colleague and I are speaking of today—more streamlining and less bureaucracy, improved customer service and more accountability—will result in better government, a government that protects jobs, keeps families secure and strengthens Ontario.

### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** My statement today is about the government's adaptation to a changing world where Ontario families are busier than ever, where value for tax dollars is ever important, and where taxpayers expect and deserve convenient, prompt and professional service whether it's from a local clothing store or a provincial government Web site.

To deliver the service that taxpayers deserve, government and opposition MPPs alike must remember that structures that make sense to governments do not make sense to real people. So the government will continue to simplify and streamline its operations. Even today citizens, businesses and municipal leaders frequently must deal with several Ontario government ministries, all pursuing related objectives, or are confronted with several different programs, each addressing a similar

need. The goal will be one-window access and co-ordination among ministries.

There was a time when business transactions with the government could take up to 12 weeks. That's a 12-week delay in creating a job, or preserving a job, or completing the paperwork necessary to leverage a new investment. Now, thanks to the government's Ontario Business Connects system, you can register a new business, change business registry data and even apply for permits and licences all in a single, 20-minute computer session.

Business Connects is available at 145 terminals around the province, but the government has gone a step further by opening the service to thousands of users through the Internet.

To achieve similar objectives, the government will reduce the number of forms it uses to collect information and provide services to businesses and individuals. Remaining forms will be more user-friendly and made available electronically where possible.

Another example of this approach is our growing e-laws service. On the government Web site the government will provide taxpayers with electronic access to up-to-date versions of provincial statutes and regulations. Today, provisions are posted within two weeks of enactment, an improvement over the previous 18 months. By mid-2002, laws will be posted within 24 to 48 hours of their enactment or amendment.

The government will also become a world leader in electronic service delivery by giving citizens seamless and convenient access to government information services. Individuals and businesses will have greater choice about how, when and where they access routine government information, perform transactions, obtain advice and purchase products. They will be able to evaluate the quality of service themselves.

A service which we are going to be improving—and I would like to make an announcement about this—is the vital statistics registration and the Ontario vital statistics improvement project, known as ONVIP. This is a new initiative which will simplify that service.

Thousands of babies have been born in Ontario since this government was first elected, and to register those births, parents and doctors must go through several steps. Forms go back and forth to the registrar's office. Three months later, the parents receive a notice of birth, followed by further delays and correspondence to allow for corrections. Only then, after the statement of birth—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Sorry to interrupt. The member take his seat. Stop the clock. Order. Sometimes I know members will find things amusing, but I can't hear the minister and I'm probably 12 feet away. I would appreciate some co-operation. Sorry, Minister, for the interruption.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I believe that the registration of vital statistics via electronic means will improve this service for thousands of people and allow them to obtain birth certificates in a much more timely fashion.

With these goals in mind, we are now contacting the stakeholders to consult with them on what is needed to make these orderly changes to this system. In coming months, we will eliminate unnecessary steps and delays to make this system more user-friendly.

When people register a life event, they also expect appropriate protection of their personal privacy. Every government is learning that the new information technology creates new concerns about privacy. Privacy can be protected most effectively if we treat it as a broad public concern. We're doing that, by making the ministry responsible for the protection of Ontario consumers a ministry that is also responsible for the protection of the privacy of Ontarians. New privacy legislation will guard an individual's right to privacy protection. We can afford no less than to enact the best possible protection for the privacy of our citizens.

## GOVERNMENT INSPECTIONS

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** To meet all the challenges of the 21st century, our government has chosen to focus on three priorities: growth, fiscal responsibility and accountability. We have taken significant steps to ensure that our operations are conducted prudently and efficiently. We have cut taxes, reduced red tape and eliminated barriers to economic growth.

High-performing businesses and industries have told us that less duplication between government inspectors and auditors and streamlined enforcement will help both them and the public in Ontario. Business will be able to focus on increasing competitiveness and economic growth and taxpayers will receive a higher value for tax dollars when inspectors target those companies which pose the highest area of risk.

We all want to live in a safe society, protected from fraud, on-the-job accidents, and with a clean and safe environment. We all share in that goal. That is why today I am announcing that the government will consult broadly, with the goal of introducing a code that would protect individuals and businesses in their dealings with the government and its agencies. This code will protect the right to be treated fairly and with respect, to know why you or your business is being audited, inspected or investigated, and to be presumed to be law-abiding until the contrary is found. It will be called a declaration of taxpayers' rights.

## CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** As you know, our government's top priority is growth—growth in the economy and growth in jobs. That is why today I am also announcing that by June 30, 2002, the government will review the competitiveness of Ontario's construction industry, particularly the industrial, commercial and institutional sector and determine the effect of recent legislative amendments.



The construction industry is key to Ontario's economic growth and well-being. The industrial, commercial and institutional sector generates more than \$8 billion a year for our economy. In the residential sector, Ontario saw 71,521 new housing starts last year alone.

During the last session, the Legislature passed Bill 69, the Labour Relations Amendment Act (Construction Industry), 2000. The act modernizes and improves competitiveness in Ontario's \$8-billion annual ICI construction sector. It improves the ability of unionized contractors to compete in the industry by creating a more level playing field. It will also help new homebuyers by minimizing the risk of consecutive strikes in the residential sector.

Our review will determine how well these measures are working to achieve the objective of a strong and viable construction industry.

The people of Ontario are the ultimate winners. A vibrant and competitive construction industry creates jobs, spurs development and has a positive effect on all segments of the economy. Our ultimate goal is to have in place fair, balanced and flexible labour relations in the industry. We will do what is necessary to keep this important sector strong and beneficial for all of us.

1520

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My response is to the Minister of Energy's announcement on the deregulation of electricity in May 2002. I say to the people of Ontario that this is an issue of the highest stakes. It is the largest privatization ever in North America, and we're being asked to put our confidence in the Mike Harris government, a government that I think everyone in Ontario would agree—is health care in better shape now than when he became Premier? Is education in better shape now than when he became Premier? Is the environment in better shape? Are our municipalities in better shape?

We're being asked to put our confidence in Mike Harris to do this properly. Frankly, on behalf of Ontario, we don't have confidence in Mike Harris. Several months ago, my colleague Mr Conway wrote a letter to the Premier and said: "Here's what we believe should happen. Set up a select committee on the deregulation of electricity—an all-party, public committee to monitor this." Surely that's the least this government could do.

The warning signs are everywhere. Just yesterday, President Bush said, "I am anxious to get Canada's energy. I want electricity from Canada." We saw what happened with deregulation in California. It was an example where they say there was not enough generation. So here we are, embarking on this at a time when, in our opinion, the protection for the generation of electricity for Ontarians may very well not be there. So I say to the Minister of Finance, who is leaving now, have an opportunity for the public to look at this and to examine it as we go along.

We talk about competition. The government has allowed Hydro now to acquire over one-third of what's called the municipal electrical distribution companies. There's a monopoly going on behind the scenes when competition was supposed to be what this was all about.

We talk about controlling the price of electricity. The government now has an 8% increase on the cost of electricity, and it's going to go to 20%. The Provincial Auditor has warned us about this. He says it is the taxpayer who is on the hook for this debt. Ontario Hydro itself did not follow what are called generally accepted accounting principles in reporting their finances. They essentially cooked the books. They took a substantial amount of expenses and put it in the debt. The auditor said, "You can't do that."

So I say to the people of Ontario that what you're being asked to do today is put your faith in the hands of Mike Harris. I don't think many reasonable people want to run that risk. So let's do what my colleague Mr Conway said several months ago. Let's open this process up.

Just a few weeks ago, my leader spelled out the seven principles we should be following in this exercise. I looked through the principles the government took today, and they don't follow those. I urge the people of Ontario to be aware of the principles Dalton McGuinty has outlined here, to follow the recommendation we put forward to open this process up to some air. Let's not let the people who stand to make enormous money—this is the biggest privatization in the history of North America. Let's have a voice for the people and let's have an open, clear, transparent process, as my leader has suggested.

#### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** Just responding to the announcement by the Minister of Consumer and Business Services with respect to registering or making it easy to register a new announcement, new companies, new births and stuff like that on-line, I have to say that this isn't going to do one iota of improvement for small business people in Ontario. It's easy to extol on a regular basis the importance of small business in Ontario. But when it comes to helping small business in Ontario, there isn't very much that is coming from the government. There are too many other factors, and none of them that influence that growth have been addressed by the minister today. I hope that after consultation he can come back and announce the changes and reform that indeed will improve the lives of small business people in Ontario.

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I want to respond to the Minister of Energy, and I want people across Ontario to understand clearly what this government is doing. This government is about to sell off what was Ontario Hydro—now Ontario Power Genera-

tion—to their corporate friends in the international energy business. I want people to understand that unlike the Liberals, who merely want to slow the process down, New Democrats oppose this sell-off of our electric energy to your corporate friends. We oppose it because it's a dirty deal—a dirty deal for consumers, for industry and for the environment.

I want people to reflect on what this Minister of Energy said three years ago when they first brought this proposal forward. He said we should follow California, that privatization and deregulation in California was an overwhelming success, that it was leading to lower electricity rates. Well, Minister, where have you been for the last three years? People in California are facing cumulative rate increases of over 70%. Billions of dollars of economic activity has been lost in California because they don't have dependable electricity. People in California are already faced with more energy brownouts and blackouts this summer, and guess what? The government of California has had to bail out this minister's energy corporate friends to the tune of over \$10 billion already, and they're now looking at ways to get control over the electricity system again, to regulate.

Then this minister referred to Alberta. I invite him to go out to Alberta and talk to those businesses that have to schedule their workers at midnight because that's the only time they can afford to buy electricity. For some industries the price has gone up by three and a half times.

He then referred to natural gas deregulation and said the deregulation of natural gas was such a good thing that Ontario consumers should support the deregulation and privatization of electricity. I invite the consumers of Ontario to look at their natural gas bills, which have gone up and up and which show no sign of abating.

This minister says there is lots of supply in Ontario. I don't think that's the issue. What we need to be looking at is the supply in Illinois, in Ohio, in Michigan, in New York. Minister, didn't you hear George Bush this weekend when he said very clearly that the American states don't have enough electricity? They want to get their hands on our electricity supply. That's George Bush's agenda. Are you in George Bush's pocket, or are you protecting the energy consumers of Ontario?

Minister, after you've sold off Ontario Power Generation to your energy corporation friends, where do you think they're going to want to sell the power? In Toronto, where the current price is 9.5 cents a kilowatt hour, or in New York, where they can get 23 cents a kilowatt hour, or Chicago, where they can get almost double the price here, or Detroit, where they can get almost double the price?

1530

Minister, what you're setting up is this: international energy corporations will gladly buy up parts of old Ontario Hydro, now Ontario Power Generation, and they will gladly take power that is produced cheaply in Ontario and sell it at double and triple the price in the United States. You know that, just like natural gas, if

consumers in Ontario aren't prepared to pay double and triple the price, in other words pay the American price, we will watch our electricity being exported. That's what you're setting up.

The manager of the paper mill in my hometown isn't noted as a New Democratic supporter, but when he comes to me and says, "Our power rate is already going to go up by 30%. We can't sustain this. We will have to lay off people," the minister should be listening.

This is not good for the environment, it is not good for our industries, it is not good for our consumers. It will satisfy George Bush. He will be happy. Your corporate friends will be happy: buy cheap in Ontario, sell expensive in the United States. They'll make a lot of money. But somebody has to look out for Ontario consumers, and it's pretty clear it's not you and it's not the Liberals, who favour this policy but just want to slow it down a little.

Get on the job, Minister. Pay attention to what happened in California and Alberta. Kill this dirty deal now.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we begin question period I will remind the members of our procedures. You get about a minute in total for the question. At about 50 seconds I will give you a warning, saying either, "Question" or "Answer," and then you'll have about 10 seconds to try and wrap up. We'll try to stick as closely as we can to that, and we will be using the table as a guideline. They will give me some of the signals as well. So if all members will kindly try to remember that, you've got about a minute, and at about 50 seconds we'll give you a warning. I would appreciate it if the only warning came from me, that other people don't shout out, because it gets confusing. Sometimes you don't know who's calling out. Then we'll be able to get as many questions on as possible.

It is now time for question period.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My first question today is for the Minister of Education. It has been 124 days now since this House was sitting, and during that time the crisis that you have created in public education right across the province of Ontario has grown and indeed flourished. Schools are sapped of their spirit, we have teachers without enthusiasm and students without extracurricular activities. I want to speak to you specifically on this last point.

Last December, Gerrard Kennedy and I presented a plan to you to restore peace in our schools. That plan received tremendous support in many quarters right across the province of Ontario, but especially from parents and students themselves. Today, four months later, our children are still going to school without



basketball and soccer and after-school drama and things of that nature. I can tell you, as a parent of four teenagers, those kinds of activities are a very important part of a well-rounded education.

My question to you on behalf of Ontario's working families is, when are you going to do something to restore extracurricular activities to our schools?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** We all know the price of the so-called Liberal peace plan: that was to increase student workload yet again in order to decrease teacher workload. That's not the solution to extracurricular activities.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, if you don't like our solution, if you don't like the one that was put forward by your own task force, which you also gave very short shrift to and dismissed out of hand, then where the heck is your solution?

Since Mike Harris took office, Ontario students have suffered through 57 work stoppages involving over one million of our children. In Windsor, support staff strikes have caused kids to be out for five weeks now, in the near north kids were out for three and a half weeks until very recently, and today in Toronto the doors to 560 schools, affecting 300,000 children, are closed. You blame the boards, in typical fashion, Minister, and then you blame the unions and anybody else you can get your hands on, but you won't take responsibility.

Your throne speech was rife with references to accountability and responsibility. My question to you is, when are you going to take responsibility for the crisis you've created in public education and do something about it?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** This government has set forward a very careful and detailed plan for quality education reforms in this province. We've gone through it with improving the curriculum, improving funding, improving many areas and how school boards are supported. All of those reforms the honourable member and his party have fought and have not supported. They haven't wanted to have standardized testing. They haven't wanted to have teacher testing. They haven't wanted to have a tougher curriculum that will give our students what they need. Our record on quality education is very clear. Of course we know there are groups and organizations that are opposing this. We sit down and work with our partners, as I continue to do.

I'd like to say to the honourable member that he is sadly misinformed if his critic told him we dismissed the report. We did not. I said no such thing. The other thing that—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Answer?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, why don't you just be straight with us? You're not working to improve education in Ontario; you are actively presiding over its undoing. Families are worried sick about the future of public education. We've got teachers without enthusiasm, schools sapped of their spirit, students robbed of

their extracurricular activities, all of this at a time when we had laid before you a very thorough and comprehensive plan to improve student learning right across the province. We've offered that to you. You have chosen to cherry-pick from that and to put in place apparently public school choice, something we support. But in addition to that, it is very important that you continue to make necessary investments in public education. More specifically, we believe our class sizes should be smaller in those years from junior kindergarten through to grade 3.

If you want to do something to bring about real improvement in student learning in Ontario, why don't you adopt our plan?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I wish I had more time to go through his so-called plan: his plan to water down the curriculum; his plan to increase student workloads and decrease teacher workloads; his plan to spend \$1 billion—some extra, which he hasn't told us where he's going to get it from. He says he's going to give parents choice. The very things we are putting in place to make choice a reality for parents he opposes. That's the Liberal plan as opposed to what this government is doing: increasing education funding yet again. Perhaps the honourable member was too busy to notice that we have put \$370 million more new dollars into the education system because we believe that focusing resources on our kids in classrooms is extremely important. That will continue to be the way this government moves forward.

He raises the task force. I notice he didn't say anything about the other task force recommendation that asked the unions to stop preventing teachers who want to do extracurricular activities from doing them. Where's the honourable member on that particular point?

## HEALTH CARE REFORM

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

The question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, I want to speak to you today in some detail about your plans to introduce two-tier health care into Ontario. For me, one-tier care is a non-negotiable. It's part of the bedrock of our province. One-tier health care not only makes us compassionate and caring; the fact of the matter is, it makes us more competitive. It gives Ontario businesses a real edge.

Obviously you see things differently. You want to bring in two-tier health care. You want a Pinto plan for working families and Cadillac service for the wealthy. Now that we've brought this into the open, can you share with us your details of your two-tier health care plan, because working families are very concerned about your plans?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'd like to correct the record in this chamber. Indeed, I have never spoken about any form of government policy in the manner in which the Leader of the Opposition has.

1540

The Premier is on record and I am on record supporting health care reform within the context of universal accessibility. Indeed, I have said time and time again that I and I'm sure every member of this caucus and practically every Ontarian believe that we should never deny medically necessary services on the basis of money, and we stand by that.

What we are for is reform of the system that will maintain its sustainability. We are looking for innovation, we are looking for best practices and we are looking for accountability. If the honourable member has a single new idea in this area, I'd be happy to hear it.

**Mr McGuinty:** You may not understand what you did through your throne speech, Minister, but you threatened Ontario's working families with two-tier health care. I'll quote from your own throne speech. You specifically said, "The federal Commission on the Future of Health Care ... must be free to consider all aspects of the system.... It should not be limited by a narrow mandate or by restrictions on discussion."

If we look at the mandate given to the federal commission, it says, "to recommend policies and measures to ensure a universally accessible, publicly funded health system." My question to you on behalf of Ontario's working families is, which constraints placed on that mandate do you disagree with, the part that says it has to be publicly funded or the part that says it has to be universally accessible?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Again I say to the honourable member—the Premier has been quite clear on this; we have been quite clear on this—we believe in universal accessibility. We have a publicly funded system and parts of the system that are privately funded. They have always been privately funded. Indeed, we are not prejudging in any event. We want innovation; we want best practices; we want accountability.

I could do no better than to quote Minister Allan Rock, who says, "We must find new ways of responding to Canadians' health care needs and we must not be afraid of change; we must embrace it." That's what the honourable federal Liberal minister said. We are willing to engage in the discussion on that basis, and I encourage the honourable member to have the courage to do the same.

**Mr McGuinty:** Ontarians aren't afraid of change when it comes to protecting and indeed enhancing medicare in Ontario. They're not afraid of change. They are only afraid of your kind of change when you consistently make reference to introducing two-tier health care into the province of Ontario. Listen, the people you campaigned for at the federal level embrace two-tier health care. You cannot now be seen to be backing away from this.

I'm asking you to be upfront on behalf of Ontario's working families. They are very much frightened by your references to two-tier health care and they want to know exactly where you stand. Will you now back away from the statements made in the throne speech, which ob-

viously took issue with the federal constraints on the mandate given to Roy Romanow which said that health care, as we improve it, must be universally accessible and publicly funded? Will you back away from the statements found in your throne speech?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Obviously he and I disagree on the interpretation of the throne speech, but I encourage him to reread it. There is no mention of the phrase he uses. I have never used the phrase he uses. I have always said that no person in Ontario, indeed all of Canada, should be denied medically necessary services on the basis of money.

Here is what Roy Romanow says, "I do not, cannot and will not prejudice the outcome of the commission's work before it even starts." We're willing to engage in the dialogue based on the principles I have enunciated, based on the principles of universal accessibility, based on the principles of the fact that there are publicly funded as well as privately funded aspects of health care.

We need new ideas. We need innovation. We need to find a way to sustainability. That is why we want to change the status quo. If the honourable member is in favour of the status quo, if the honourable member wants to waltz merrily along in self-deception that the status quo is sustainable, he can do that, but we on this side of the House have the leadership of Mike Harris and will do the right thing.

## COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, today you announced the date for your dirty deal to sell off Ontario's hydroelectricity system, but in the three years you've been working on this, all of the arguments you've presented for it, in favour of it, have collapsed.

Three years ago, when you first hatched this idea, you said that electricity prices in California had fallen because of deregulation. You said that Ontario should copy California. Minister, there's been a 70% increase in electricity prices, cumulative, in California just over the last year and people are still facing brownouts and blackouts.

Minister, will you admit you were wrong about California and your dirty deal to sell out Ontario's hydroelectricity system is wrong? Cancel the dirty deal now. Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** Ontario is not California. What's happened to California, particularly over the last three years, is you've seen demand go through the roof because of the good economic times they've had there and you've seen supply stagnate. As a result, prices have gone up in the last three years.

It was quite true three years ago, because there was a legislated price decrease to consumers, that prices had gone down at that time in California. But they've messed up deregulation in California. That's very clear. There are some 39 other jurisdictions in the world that have



done a good job of introducing competition in their electricity sectors, and prices have been lower than they otherwise would have been under the old monopoly systems.

Ontario has an adequate supply of electricity. The Independent Electricity Market Operator forecast that we have at least 10 years of adequate supply, so we won't ever be a California, and new supply is coming on-line as new generators come in.

**Mr Hampton:** How quickly the minister changes his story. It wasn't anyone over here who said that California's energy prices were going down. You said it. It was no one over here who said we should follow California. You said it.

Minister, it's not just California. Go out to Alberta and explain to Alberta factory workers, who now only work the midnight shift because that's the only time of day that the companies can afford to purchase electricity. That's what's happening in Alberta.

Minister, what are you going to say to the consumers of Ontario, the industries of Ontario, when Ontario's rates start going up as well because the international companies who want to buy up our electricity system are more interested in exporting the power than they are in selling it here at a cheaper price? What's your answer to consumers and industries?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Ontario is not California or Alberta. We have adequate supply of electricity. In fact, with the help of the Power Workers Union we expect to see Pickering units come on-line early in 2002, early next year. That will give us 2,000 more megawatts of power. Bruce Power, which the Power Workers Union has an equity stake in, announced some three weeks ago that they'll spend \$437 million of their money to bring back two nuclear units.

We have adequate supply. We have the exact opposite situation, if the honourable member would care to do any research. We have a company that generates 90% of the electricity. We've got lots of electricity. We just have exceedingly high prices and \$38 billion worth of debt that your government didn't do a darned thing about in the five years that you were in office—completely irresponsible. Prices went up some 35% while they were in office and they didn't pay down one penny of the principal of the debt. That is a disgraceful record.

**Mr Hampton:** This minister talks about supply. Well, George Bush was talking about supply this past weekend in Quebec City. What he said is they don't have enough supply in New York or Illinois or Ohio or Michigan, and he wants Ontario's supply.

Speaker, I ask you, if you could buy up one of those generating stations that the minister is going to put on the block, would you sell the power in Ontario for nine cents a kilowatt-hour or would you sell it in New York for 24 cents a kilowatt-hour?

That's what you're going to do to Ontario consumers. Ontario consumers will either pay the American price or we'll watch our electricity being exported. That's your agenda, an agenda for your energy corporation friends.

What are you going to do to protect Ontario consumers when the international energy corporations say, "We want to buy the power in Ontario but we want to sell it in New York and Chicago, where we can get a higher price"? What's your answer there, Minister?

1550

**Hon Mr Wilson:** The government has set up an independent market operator whose job is to protect the people of Ontario and to protect consumers and put consumers first. Also, I remind the honourable member that at any given time less than a fifth of the electricity supply in Ontario can be exported to the United States. There are only 4,000 megawatts of power, and that power has to go both ways. By the way, today we do—and we proudly do—sell energy to the United States. We keep the lights on during peak times in New York, at lunchtime and dinnertime, and we make several hundred million dollars a year, which this government, since the Energy Competition Act was passed in 1998, has been putting toward the \$38-billion worth of debt that neither the Liberals nor the NDP dealt with when they were in office.

Finally, it was the Honourable Jean Chrétien, the Liberal Prime Minister of Canada, who first talked about helping Mr Bush with his energy crisis. I want the honourable member to know that I was on the phone with Mr Goodale, the federal minister, some two weeks ago asking that energy ministers in this country be consulted. He has agreed to put a meeting together in early May, but only because of my intervention.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My next question is for the Minister of Education. In the throne speech your government preached a lot about accountability, but I want to ask you about your lack of accountability for the school system. You've been so careless with the school system that we have more labour disputes now than we have recesses in our schools. What boards are asking you to do is recognize that the funding formula is not adequate and that you need to meet with the boards of education and provide them with the additional funds that will be necessary if our schools are going to function as they should.

Minister, will you finally be accountable and agree that the funding formula needs to be opened up so that we can fund our schools adequately and are not facing labour dispute after labour dispute in the school system? Show true accountability, Minister. Do that.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** With all due respect to the honourable member, who I thought agreed with the collective bargaining process and now appears to be asking us to interfere in it, we have opened up the funding formula and given school boards over \$310 million, plus other money for pressures they have this year. We recognize the funding pressures school boards have, and we have continued to increase resources so

they can come to fair collective agreements with their support staff.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** M<sup>me</sup> la Ministre, clearly you're not dealing very well with the funding pressures. Talking about record increases in heating costs, the Toronto board alone has had \$17 million in heating costs—just them. Yes, you were very generous. You gave them \$6.5 million. The rest, \$10.5 million, has to be found in operating funds. I'm glad you're so very generous with the board, but you know they don't have the money to negotiate fairly with non-teaching staff. I know that you know that.

Another thing, Minister: every day that strikers are out, the province, not the board, makes \$1 million. That's \$14 million in your pocket and not the board's. I tell you, Minister, that you can help solve this problem today. All you have to do is send that \$14 million back and the strike will be over. Can you do that, or can you consider that?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Indeed, school boards received \$40 million more this year for heating fuel costs, because we recognize that is a pressure they experience. I recognize that for the NDP the solution to everything is to simply put more money there. We recognize the need for new investments, but we also recognize the responsibility of school boards, like all our other public sector partners, to be respectful of the taxpayers' dollar. They have to live within a budget, much as families and heads of any organization do. All our school boards are being asked to handle that taxpayers' money in an accountable fashion.

We're open and transparent about where the money goes, how we fund the boards. Through the throne speech, we've made a commitment to make sure there is an auditing process that ensures those dollars are being used where they're supposed to be used, because we believe that taxpayers' money deserves to go to school boards to provide good, quality education services for our kids.

#### HEALTH CARE REFORM

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Minister of Health. One of the most important things Ontario families look for when they consider their health care system is to make sure they've got access to a family doctor in their community. During the past two years, the number of underserved communities in our province has grown by 25%. There are now 109 communities suffering through a physician shortage crisis. For six long and painful years, this government refused to even admit there was a problem when it came to the numbers of our doctors.

Two and a half months ago, I put out a comprehensive plan to start addressing the doctor shortage crisis in Ontario. You will know, Minister, that my plan includes new medical schools—one in the north and one near Windsor—removing barriers to foreign physicians, using more nurse practitioners and a real plan for 24-7 health care. Why haven't you adopted my plan to bring more doctors to our underserved communities?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Actually we did adopt it and announced it before he actually announced his plan, in the sense that we have already put 40 additional places in the medical schools. We have a plan to provide \$40,000 in tuition reimbursement and location incentives for medical students. We are expanding the international medical graduate program by 50% and targeting all these new positions to underserved areas and specialties. We're doubling the number of community development officers to help underserved areas. We're expanding by 25% the entry positions to two northern family medical residency training programs.

These are things we already announced a few months ago. If the honourable member repeated them in his plan, I suppose that's a good sign that at least he is only six months behind what the government is doing.

**Mr McGuinty:** I can tell you that the only thing that's expanding under Mike Harris's watch, and now on your watch, is the number of underserved communities in Ontario. You have been dithering, dillying and dallying and still we now have 109 underserved communities in Ontario. Thunder Bay is a city of 117,000 people. In that city, there are 40,000 people who are without a family doctor. Go to Windsor, go to Kitchener-Waterloo, go to Parry Sound, go to Sudbury, go to Cornwall, travel the northern part of this province and you will quickly conclude that families are in a dire predicament because they can't get access to a family doctor. You can tell me that you're doing all kinds of things, but the fact of the matter is, on the front lines in our communities Ontario families can't get Ontario family doctors.

I ask you again, why won't you implement our plan, expand our medical school spaces and begin to move forward on something other than your two-tier health care agenda and help Ontario families?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Between April 1, 1995, and March 23 this year, communities designated as underserved were successful in recruiting 267 family physicians and 171 specialists. Is it enough? No, it's not enough. Despite all the things we have mentioned so far, we believe more things have to be done. If the honourable member has any suggestions other than repeating what we already know, then we would be happy to include his suggestions in any deliberations.

This issue has been around in rural, remote and northern areas for some time. In fact, there is a worldwide physician shortage. We are competing with many other jurisdictions, not only the United States but other jurisdictions as well. I certainly will take the honourable member's comments under advisement.

1600

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. Both myself and my constituents have heard you talk about the principles that will allow Ontario to



successfully open the electricity market to competition. Also today we've heard the ranting and the raging of the leader of the third party trying to strike fear into the residents of Ontario.

Minister, with the phenomenal growth that we've experienced in the province of Ontario over the last five years, I'm really left wondering, can we avoid the problems that have indeed occurred in California? Can you assure my constituents in Northumberland, and all Ontarians for that matter, that we can indeed avoid the problems that California is facing?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** Thank you to my colleague for the question. Ontario is not California. California and Alberta find themselves in a supply crunch, where they just don't have enough electricity. Neither of those jurisdictions has built any new generation plant in the last 10 years, and yet demand has gone up because they've had good economies, new businesses have moved in, lots of people have moved in and they need more electricity, but they did not plan well for the future.

The Independent Electricity Market Operator in Ontario just recently completed a study indicating that Ontario has ample supply of electricity over the next 10 years, but it is important that we begin to plan for the period when we do need more power. That study was done not taking into account the fact that Bruce Power is bringing up two nuclear units, announced some three weeks ago. It did not take into account the fact that Pickering is coming back on line in January, bringing even more power to the Ontario economy.

**Mr Galt:** Thank you very much, Minister, for all that information and for that response. That is certainly good to hear and reassuring for my constituents.

We've also had phenomenal growth here in the province of Ontario since the PCs took office back in 1995, but unfortunately we did inherit that phenomenal debt of over \$30 billion, a sum that hadn't been paid down by the previous governments.

Specifically, I am wondering if you could please describe what the difference is between Ontario and California as it relates to adequate supply of electricity to ensure the ongoing growth in jobs and the economy here in the province of Ontario.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Another significant difference is California got whacked pretty hard with the quadrupling of natural gas prices which had a natural effect of raising electricity rates. Fifty three per cent of the electricity generated in California is done so by using natural gas, so obviously when natural gas prices went up, electricity prices went through the roof. Only 4% of electricity in Ontario is produced using natural gas, so we're not hit with nearly the same impact as California.

Finally, I want to mention a quote. CIBC World Markets recently did a study and I'll quote from it. "In contrast to California, electricity market conditions in Ontario suggest that deregulation will deliver benefits to consumers, companies in the Canadian energy business and the economy as a whole." Reasons cited for their

confidence include: Ontario has a large supply of domestic electricity which is easily sufficient to meet growing demand without relying on neighbouring jurisdictions; Ontario's power prices are not susceptible to rising natural gas prices like California's; and Ontario's deregulation model is favourable to new power investment.

That's an independent study by one of the world's largest financial houses and it's favourable—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up.

## HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Three years ago your government ordered the hospitals in Picton, Trenton, Belleville and Bancroft to amalgamate into the Quinte Healthcare Corp. These are hospitals that are 160 kilometres apart. That's like amalgamating a hospital in Belleville and Toronto.

You committed at that time that there would be absolutely no reduction in services. However, this wonderful funding formula that you use treats the hospitals as if they are all located on one site in an urban area. Picton and Trenton are at real risk of losing all but the most basic of services.

My question to you today is not how much money you're spending on health. My question is not what's on the TV ads and it's not what is going on in other provinces. My question is very simple: will you reaffirm this government's commitment to maintain all of the services at all of the hospitals operated by Quinte Healthcare Corp?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The fact of the matter is that we are committed to ensuring that hospitals, as a crucial element of our health services, do provide every service available that is needed in our system. Now, how to get there required this government, quite frankly, to make some difficult but necessary decisions about the types of hospitals in certain communities and to make sure that the hospitals that were available in our communities were in some way reorganized. We think it has encouraged the kind of accountability that is necessary for the delivery of excellent medical services at hospitals. Do we have more to do in terms of accountability? Absolutely we do.

**Mr Parsons:** Accountability is not an issue. Quinte Healthcare has nothing to be concerned about on having its books examined. But what it does know is that it is being underfunded by \$4.8 million for this coming year and cannot offer the services it previously did and wants to continue to offer.

Minister, we're asking you to put lives ahead of tax cuts. Provide the funding to allow rural Ontario to have the basic services they now have and to ensure that the citizens in rural Ontario receive the services they need for now, next year and forever—no one-time dollars. I'm asking you to commit to maintain the services. We're not

talking funding. We want absolutely no service cuts, and I want you to reaffirm that commitment.

**Hon Mr Clement:** Far be it for me to take my cue from the leader of the official opposition, but he in fact said, "I am convinced that there is enough money in the health system. I don't think we are spending it as effectively as we can." This has been a constant challenge on our part, to make sure that the money is spent effectively. Ontario spent \$8.5 billion on hospital spending last year alone, \$154 million for new medical equipment, \$121 million for priority programs, \$71 million for new operating beds. The list goes on.

Our challenge is not shovelling more money in; it is to make sure that every single dollar possible goes to patient care, goes to the care in the community that is required for Ontarians to have confidence in their health care system. I can assure the honourable member that we will never derogate from that goal.

### CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. In your statement earlier today you mentioned that the government was reviewing competitiveness in the construction industry to determine the effect of recent legislation.

Back in the fall, this House passed Bill 69, which brought in some reforms to the Labour Relations Act. I remember that this bill, which fulfilled the throne speech, committed to modernize labour relations in the construction industry, in the residential, industrial, commercial, institutional sectors of the construction industry. I also remember quite well how residents of Ontario who bought homes back in 1998 were greatly inconvenienced by multiple strikes in the residential construction sector. The industry ground to a halt that summer as trade after trade went on strike and closed down construction for months.

Minister, can you please tell us about the changes made in Bill 69 and what you expect to see?

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I thank the member for Peterborough for the question. Bill 69 did deal with the residential issue with respect to the ongoing strikes that caused five months of shutdown in the housing sector. It was a domino effect: one trade would go on strike for a few weeks, then as soon as they came back another went out. It caused five months of shutdowns, which of course isn't good for the unions, isn't good for the builders and isn't very good for the people who bought the houses and are waiting to get in.

Bill 69 dealt with the issue by responding to industry concerns of overlapping strikes. We sat down with the unions and we sat down with the builders and we came to an agreement that was embraced by all parties, unions and builders.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** Not quite.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Yes, it was embraced by everybody. All agreements are to have the common expiry date April 30, the 46-day window for strike lockout

would end June 15, dispute resolution by binding arbitration, self-repeals after the next round of negotiations, at industry request.

What it came down to was that we did reach a consensus, a consensus with the communities involved: the unions, the builders and those people who needed their homes after they bought them. I think it was a brilliant bill and it's going to work this summer.

**Mr Stewart:** Thank you, Minister. I think many people involved in the trades also feel that.

Bill 69 also affected the ICI sector. Could you tell us a bit about what that effect could be?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** The ICI part of Bill 69 was a little more complicated and a little more difficult. There was what I thought was agreement between the parties, but in the end it had some difficulty working its way through the trades and local areas.

1610

The ICI target framework established a middle ground for both sides that they could live with. It allowed amendments to province-wide collective agreements dealing with financial issues, the amendments made through negotiations or arbitration process, and a final offer selection process streamlined to 35 days.

Let me be clear: we're entering into the phase of negotiations province-wide in the ICI sector. My belief is that it's got to be sector-specific and sensitive to regions. Not all regions can pay X amount of dollars for certain trades, because it isn't competitive. In my opinion, when this bill is formally targeted and set early in May, I think we'll find a middle ground and a consensus that was an agreement by all parties and will work effectively for everyone involved in that industry.

### CANCER TREATMENT

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, your government recently agreed to a private contract between Cancer Care Ontario and a private, for-profit service deliverer to provide after-hours cancer treatment. In last week's throne speech and several times today, you talked about government accountability, so I'm quite sure you will agree with me that Ontarians deserve to see a copy of the agreement that you approved between Cancer Care Ontario and Canadian Oncology Services Ltd.

Today I'm asking you what I've been denied through other sources. I've asked, members of the public have asked and members of the media have asked. We have not been given this contract. Will you provide us with a copy of the contract between Cancer Care Ontario and Canadian Oncology Services Ltd?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. By virtue of the way she has asked the question, she is aware that this is an agreement between Cancer Care Ontario, which is a third-party body, and the provider. I hope she can understand why I don't have a direct line on that.



I will tell you this: there was a question raised, I believe in one of the legislative committees, about a value-for-money audit, with respect to this engagement, by the Provincial Auditor. We would be very pleased to co-operate should the auditor decide to do so. We'd be pleased to co-operate with the Provincial Auditor and provide any documentation we have available to us.

**Ms Lankin:** Look, Minister, you're the one who said four times today that accountability is an issue in spending of public dollars out in the institutions delivering health services. In your throne speech, let me tell you what you said: "Accountability is required of all institutions funded by taxpayers. Government is the servant of people, not the master. Citizens are entitled to transparency in the operation of public institutions, including openness about how they spend and reporting of their performance and results." I agree.

Minister, you were party to the funding agreement for this private clinic. You were party to the bonusing scheme that pays based on the number of patients seen, not the quality of care given. Are you going to tell me that you agreed to spend and fund those services with taxpayers' dollars without looking at the contract that was going to be signed? I think not, Minister.

If you believe in accountability, if you believe in the words of your throne speech, if it was more than a sham, then you'll answer this simple question. Will you provide us with a copy of the contract that you have agreed to that will spend public dollars on a private, for-profit service deliverer?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Let me repeat that we will provide all documentation if it's a value-for-money audit by an independent third party; in other words, the Provincial Auditor. We'll provide all the documentation required for the review to be a substantive and real review.

Let me just say for the record, though, why this is an important project. Cancer Care Ontario came to us with a proposal for this after-hour clinic so we would eliminate the need for cancer victims to travel outside of this country—not even this province, but this country—for treatment by our deadline of May 31 of this year. This means there are more cancer patients who will be able to stay within Ontario, close to their families, close to their loved ones, and get the cancer care they need—at no direct cost to them, because this is a publicly funded system—so they have those necessary cancer treatments here in Ontario. I refuse to apologize for that.

## GRIDLOCK

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Before I ask him my question, I would like to congratulate him on his new responsibilities and also congratulate him for having made the special effort to be back here in the House today and to be accountable in this primary source of accountability for the government.

During a lunchtime visit to Hamilton with an introduction from the member, the member did spend some time relating his personal experiences as a commuter

from the Hamilton area to Toronto and he spoke about gridlock and about the causes of gridlock. I'm wondering if the member might repeat for the benefit of this House his belief in taking responsibility for creating gridlock and relating that to growth, and whether he might also have a personal opinion, as an experienced commuter and also as an experienced member of the government, as the transportation minister, and would tell us whether, if he had left 40 minutes later, he might still have made it to question period.

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** Actually, it took me an hour to get back to question period from Hamilton, so I think that particularly today there was no gridlock.

With reference to what the member was speaking about in terms of my comments down there, I reminded the members that from 1992 to 1997 I was commuting every day—and we remember who the people were in government in 1992—and it took me about an hour to get in to work in the morning. Today it takes about two hours, and that's because there are more people working in Ontario than ever before, the economy is booming and they have to travel in to work. Therefore, there's no doubt that there's going to be a slight increase in gridlock.

**Mr Smitherman:** That is a refreshing answer, especially compared to that of his predecessor, who only ever babbled on about all the tax room that had been created. But let me ask the minister whether he thinks, given all of this growth and the related experiences with gridlock he's spoken to, that investments in transportation from the government for those commuters along the QEW ought not to be a priority of this government, given the dramatic increase in gridlock that has occurred under that government's watch. And would he directly answer my question as to whether he might offer advice to any of his colleagues seeking to make travel plans between Hamilton and Toronto in the middle of the day, whether in fact they might have made it to be held accountable during question period.

**Hon Mr Clark:** This government has introduced the Smart Growth policy, which is going to be looking at the entire transportation network in Ontario.

If I may, I'd like to read into the record from a gentleman who I think has a lot of clout in this country: "I was pleased to learn of Premier Harris's recent speech in which he related his vision of Smart Growth. Ontario recognized that gridlock is an important economic and environmental problem that requires co-operative and innovative solutions. This includes providing transportation choices and planning communities, ie, managing future urban growth. The link between land use and planning and transit is something I've been talking about for a long time. It was a basic tenet of the Ontario government from 1950 to 1985"—and we know what happened in 1985. David Collenette, the federal transportation minister, said that.

We stand by our policies and we will continue to improve transportation in Ontario.

## PRESTATION DE SERVICES ÉLECTRONIQUES ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY

**M. Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex) :** I see the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale has as much enthusiasm in the House as he has on the hockey rink.

Ma question s'adresse au ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises. Monsieur le ministre, à la fin du mois de mars, le député de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell donnait une interview à Panorama, qui est une émission en langue française diffusée sur TFO. Au cours de cette interview, il a déclaré que si les commerces à Calgary seront en ligne à 100 % dès la fin de cette année, l'Ontario n'a « absolument aucun programme en place ».

Alors, ma question est de savoir : qu'est-ce que l'Ontario fait pour que la prestation de services électroniques soit disponible non seulement aux entreprises de l'Ontario mais à tous ses citoyens ?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** I will save the people from suffering my French at this time.

I want to thank the member for the question because I think it's important that we're clear that the government of Ontario is making sure that citizens, corporate and private, get the most efficient service.

We have implemented programs like Ontario Business Connects. We have 145 sites which allow businesses to register their names, get the licence for business and change their address.

As well, we have Ontario Parks on-line, where you can register for things like a campsite, you can deal with your angling licence, your hunting licence—many electronic services.

1620

I invite the member for Glengarry-Prescott Russell to go to 692 Main Street East, Hawkesbury, which is just down the street from his constituency office at 151 Main Street, to our business connection information centre, and he can find out for himself.

**M. Beaubien :** Je constate que notre gouvernement a lancé plusieurs initiatives dans le domaine de la prestation de services électroniques. Pourriez-vous me dire ce que votre ministère compte mettre en place pour faire en sorte que les citoyens de l'Ontario, tant particuliers que corporatifs, aient accès à des services essentiels par des moyens électroniques ?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** As I said in my statement today, this government has led North America in putting our laws and regulations on the Net. E-laws is a brand new project which we have entered into with the Legislative Assembly. It updates the laws every two weeks, when it used to take up to 18 months to get an amended copy of a law here. We are going to improve that to 24 to 48 hours on the change or amendment of a law.

Also, as I announced today, we are going to alter our registration of vital statistics for births so that this will be

done much more quickly and efficiently. People will be able to get things like their birth certificates immediately.

We are providing a number of services now via the Internet, and we're going to continue to do that. We have led in the past and we're going to lead in the future in this matter.

## EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** My question is for the Minister of Education. On April 10 I wrote to you, Minister, and asked you to intervene, consider the interruption of classes, with the Windsor Catholic school board, at that time entering its second week of children being outside their classrooms due to a custodial and teaching assistants' strike. The strike is now entering its fifth week.

I am asking you specifically for a review of the operations envelope of funding to our Catholic board. Your own funding formula, in my view, is the root cause of the current impasse. The Catholic board is hamstrung and having difficulty negotiating because the funds are simply not there at the board level.

The last review you undertook on behalf of the Windsor public board, as an audit of our funding formula for our students, resulted in millions of dollars having to be handed back to our board because you hadn't given it sufficient money to operate classrooms.

I'm asking you today, Minister, after the fifth week of students' classes being interrupted at the Windsor Catholic board, to intervene and immediately start this review and an audit.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** We review every year on a regular basis the amount of money that goes to a school board. This board has indeed had increased resources, and the board has the difficult responsibility of trying to allocate those resources appropriately and of coming to a collective agreement with their support staff.

It is indeed a tragedy that when collective agreements are at issue in this way, students' education is interrupted. It's not fair to the kids; it's certainly not fair to the parents. We have said, on this side of the House, that parents, teachers and students have said to us that there has to be a better way to settle these collective agreements in the education sector, and I certainly agree with that. However, simply opening up the floodgates of taxpayers' money to say, "We will buy our way out of every problem," is exactly how the previous Liberal government and the previous NDP government got us into some of the funding problems that we have, and that was just as much of a threat to quality education as any strike is.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Minister, the last time your ministry did a review of a Windsor school board, your ministry had to acknowledge that the board was not given sufficient money to run that board.

I'm asking you to do a review in a similar fashion with the Windsor Catholic board, which is currently at an



impasse. We asked you weeks ago to replace the mediator, to get them talking again. You didn't even call to say, "How are you doing?" let alone, "Are we getting those students back in the classroom?"

I'm asking you very specifically. A review and audit, in my view, will show that you are underfunding our school boards. Secondly, we don't want our students being used as a political football for you to launch whatever your next education announcement might be. We want our students in our schools back in the classroom, and that means that you may well have to admit once again, with the Windsor board, that you have insufficiently funded our boards. I'm asking you to do an immediate review with our ministry staff, as you did last year, which resulted in millions more coming to our boards to run the classrooms. Minister, will you, at minimum, consider this audit for our school board?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We certainly agree with audits of school boards. The ministry made no such admission. The Windsor boards received money fairly and equitably, as all other boards do. There was no special treatment for the Windsor board; there was no special treatment for the Windsor Catholic board. That's the first thing.

Secondly, the Ministry of Labour has remained in contact with parties, is quite prepared to provide whatever assistance to settle these disputes. The only people who are playing political football with our students' education are those people who are not in schools doing what parents want them to do and that is to support our school system, to teach our kids, like many thousands of committed employees and teachers are indeed doing in many other schools across this province.

### SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is for the Solicitor General. As we heard earlier in the House today, the province's sexual offender registry comes into effect today. I know that this is a top priority for many people across Ontario and certainly in my riding of Durham. Can the minister tell the House about this very important initiative.

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** In order to protect communities from sexual predators, it is not enough to know who the predators are; you have to know where they are. Christopher's Law establishes a sex offender registry which is the first of its kind in Canada. The bill is named after Christopher Stephenson, who was murdered by a convicted pedophile who was out on statutory release.

Sexual offenders must register their whereabouts and a current photograph with the local police departments upon their release from custody and whenever they move addresses. For those who break the law, because it is the law, there are significant penalties: \$25,000 for the first offence and up to a one-year prison sentence; for the second and subsequent offence, up to \$25,000 and two years less a day.

On a personal note, it's very satisfying that in fact I introduced a private member's bill in 1992—

### The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary

**Mr O'Toole:** I just want to take a moment to congratulate you as the Solicitor General on delivering on yet another promise. I would also like to thank you for a very comprehensive answer. Minister, I may be mistaken, but I have the impression that one of the recommendations of the jury in the Stephenson case was the formation of a national sex offender registry. It would appear from the press today and other comments that I've heard that there's something wrong here. Perhaps you could tell the House today just exactly what hasn't been done.

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** The honourable member is exactly correct. As Christopher's father noted in today's press, "The federal government seems to have little interest in this issue." Despite the recommendations of the coroner's jury into the Christopher Stephenson death, they have not set up a national registry. The federal Liberals insist that CPIC, the Canadian Police Information Centre, is enough. I can tell you unequivocally that all of the police officers in this province and around the country have said, "No, it is not enough."

Our government is going to continue to press the federal government to move forward with a federal registry. But in the meantime, this is a valuable tool that our government has introduced in the defence of poor, innocent people who are victimized by sexual offenders.

1630

### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. You will know that the expert panel chaired by Dr Peter George on health human resources submitted its report to your government in December 2000. On February 19, because you had not made it public, we submitted an FOI request to your ministry to try and obtain a copy of the document. We have never received a reply. In response, last week we filed an appeal with the Information and Privacy Commission to receive a copy of this important document.

Minister, northerners deserve to know what the George report said about an independent medical school in northern Ontario, so why won't you release this report?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. She asks it in good faith and deserves a good-faith answer. I recently became aware, moments before your question was asked, that this was in fact the situation. This is a situation that is new to my understanding. I can tell the honourable member and would like to tell this House that I understand a decision is imminent and that she and their caucus should be hearing shortly.

**Ms Martel:** Minister, thank you for that information. You've been the minister for some time and it's too bad that we've had to finally appeal to the privacy and information commission in order to get your attention.

Having said that, Minister, the problem is that your own figures recently released show that a record 120 physicians and 167 specialists are now needed in over 35 northern communities. Your government has done nothing, despite clause 12 in your agreement with the Ontario Medical Association signed last year, to introduce any new initiatives. Your government has not come forward despite a promise last May in Sudbury to introduce new initiatives to try and stem the loss of doctors from northern hospitals.

Minister, your government is spending \$65 million to recruit and retain in underserved areas, yet the shortage of doctors and specialists is getting worse by the day. Will you today on behalf of your government finally commit to establishing an independent medical school in northern Ontario so we can actually train doctors for where they are needed to both work and live?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Indeed, that is very similar to the representations that I and Minister Newman heard from the northern mayors we met with on April 11, as maybe the honourable member knows. I believe that meeting went very well. There was an opportunity to listen to the concerns of the mayors, and what I've been trying to do along with Minister Newman is get the points of view on the record and the solutions on the record from northerners themselves. I believe it's not only important to hear from expert panels quite frankly but to hear from citizens in Ontario. I have been in the midst of doing that and certainly will take your concerns under advisement as well.

## PETITIONS

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** On Thursday morning of last week the member for Timiskaming-James Bay and myself were presented with over 1,300 petitions from a protest of 300 northerners who came down here to protest the divestiture of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. The petition reads:

"For nearly a century the Ontario Northland has fulfilled an admirable job as northern Ontario's development tool. Our communities, large and small, the businesses, the mines and mills, and the people who live, work and play or visit to the north have come to rely on the Ontario Northland to provide them with safe and efficient quality services.

"Freight rail transportation, passenger services, motor coach, marine, rail and hotel, leading edge communication technology are all vital to the future economic development of northeastern Ontario. The mayors and councils, the chamber of commerce, economic development officials, customers and employees alike are all

saying the same thing, 'The ONDC must be preserved and expanded and not parcelled out.'

"I wish to add my name to the growing number of people who want to see the re-inventing of the Ontario Northland in its continuing crown agency role in stimulating and supporting social and economic development in northern Ontario."

I'll add my name to this petition.

## CHILD CARE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition signed by 54 people who live in Peterborough. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has cut funding for regulated child care spaces in Ontario by 15% between 1995 and 1998;

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has yet to implement the recommendations of its own commission's Early Years report by Dr Fraser Mustard to create a seamless, integrated early years education system;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million over the next five years from the federal government for early years development projects;

"Whereas the Conservative government lags behind other provinces in announcing its plans for the \$844 million in federal money for early years development; and

"Whereas other provinces are implementing innovative, affordable and accessible child care programs, such as Quebec's \$5-a-day child care program;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Harris government immediately match and earmark a significant portion of the \$844 million from the federal government for expanded regulated child care spaces and family resource centres."

I agree with the petitioners. I've affixed my signature to it.

## SEWAGE SLUDGE

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, I'd like to introduce my page, John Trickett, who's a grade 7 student from Mother Teresa school in Courtice. He's going to take my petition to the table for me.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of the Durham riding have raised concerns over the spreading and storage of sewage sludge and other biosolids; and

"Whereas Bill 149 has been introduced by MPP John O'Toole to regulate the spreading and storage of sewage sludge and biosolids, including paper sludge; and

"Whereas Bill 149 would require that no person shall spread sewage sludge or other biosolids without a



certificate of approval or a provisional certificate of approval from the director;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 149 to amend the Environmental Protection Act and add the relevant section regarding the spreading and storage of sewage sludge."

I'm pleased to affix my name on their behalf.

#### WATER EXTRACTION

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the residents and cottagers of Bob's Lake, strenuously object to the permit issued by the Ministry of the Environment to OYMA Inc to remove 1.5 million litres of water per day from the Tay River without adequate assessment of the consequences and without adequate consultation with the public and those people and groups who have expertise and interest; and

"Whereas Bob's Lake and the Tay River watersheds are already highly stressed by the historic responsibility of Parks Canada to use Bob's Lake as a reservoir for the Rideau Canal; and

"Whereas the movement of water from the lake through the watershed for navigation purposes in the canal provides sufficient stress and problems for the lake, and this water-taking permit will only compound the stresses on the waterway;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We request that this permit be rescinded until a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of water-taking by OYMA Inc on the environment, the water levels and the water needs of these communities is complete. An independent non-partisan body should undertake this evaluation."

I definitely will sign my name to this petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 41 people.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

#### SCHOOL FACILITY

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** We have a serious situation in Nipigon in terms of the condition of St Edward's Catholic school. We need some capital funding from the minister. We've been campaigning for a long time to get it. I'd like to read a petition signed by hundreds of residents who are concerned parents and families and children.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas some of the children of St Edward's Catholic school in Nipigon, Ontario, are presently accommodated in a school facility that does not meet minimal building code requirements and minimal safety standards; and

"Whereas water is streaming through the foundation wall after a rain and during the spring thaw; and

"Whereas the children are breathing stale and musty air;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to allocate capital funds to the Superior North Catholic District School Board to construct a new school facility for the students of St Edward's Catholic school."

This is a very important issue. I trust the Minister of Education is listening, and I'm happy to sign my name to the petition.

1640

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the members of the Halton Handicapped Homeless Advocacy Group, are actively trying to increase the housing opportunities for intellectually handicapped individuals who are currently on a waiting list to receive residential housing.

"Within the city of Burlington, Ontario, there are 170 individuals on the waiting list. There are 40 individuals who are in dire need of residential housing today. In some family cases, these individuals are residing with their elderly and chronically ill parents, who are struggling to meet the increasing physical and emotional demands of their adult children. It is the hope of these families that housing be immediately secured.

"We are requesting that the Parliament of Ontario immediately provide a permanent place of residency for the individuals with a handicap to live. We are also making this request as it is equally profound that these families receive a sense of security to know that their loved ones will have a place to live once they are no longer here."

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it has been determined that recent funding allocations to the developmental services sector in the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Windsor-Essex have been determined to be grossly inadequate to meet critical and urgent needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Community and Social Services immediately review the funding allocations to the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Windsor-Essex, and provide funding in keeping with the requests made by families or their agents."

I will sign this petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 304 people:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors, and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, the Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** During the off season, when the Conservatives were golfing, Gerry Lougheed Jr and Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care were out working. The petition is as follows:

"Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features all reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation;

"Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location;

"Whereas a recently released Oracle poll confirms that 92% of Ontarians support equal health travel funding;

"Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province; and

"Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Lougheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice and discrimination against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which exists presently in the province of Ontario."

I would like to thank Gerry Lougheed Jr and OSECC for garnering these 20,000 signatures.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I'm going to be happy to pass it on with Melissa. I welcome Melissa at Queen's Park.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit material in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors, and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, the Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

It's my pleasure to affix my name to it.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and relates to the many school closures that my community is facing through the school boards.

"Whereas Mike Harris is cutting the heart out of many communities by closing hundreds of neighbourhood and community schools across Ontario;

"Whereas this massive number of school closings all at once will displace many children and put others on longer bus routes; and

"Whereas since 1997 Mike Harris has taken control of education funding and policy affecting students away from local communities;

"Whereas the funding formula set up by the government has unrealistic goals for occupancy, that has schools affected by the status of other schools that are far away from their students; and

"Whereas the funding arrangements by the government caused the premature and unnecessary closure of schools that are valuable to the surrounding community and to the development of the children they serve; and

"Whereas Mike Harris is pitting parent against parent and community against community in the fight to save local schools; and

"Whereas the closure of a school should be based on local decision-making and student population, with



enough time to consider all options, not complicated formulas aimed at quickly cutting money from the system;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature to call on the Harris government to halt the closure of local schools in the province until fair funding rules can be established and it can be demonstrated that any closure will make the affected students better off."

The signatures below—Carol DuPuis, Mike Frezell—many, many parents who are very dedicated to the lives of their children.

### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's my pleasure to read a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit material in many commercial establishments; and

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit material;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit material to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately pass Bill 95, the Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

I am pleased to sign and endorse this important statement and to share it with Leonard, who is the page here today until May 4.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas in 1998 the Mike Harris government forced hospitals in Bancroft, Belleville, Picton and Trenton, Ontario, to amalgamate into the Quinte Healthcare Corp;

"Whereas the fiscal management of each of the aforementioned hospitals prior to amalgamation was prudent, efficient and accountable to their communities;

"Whereas amalgamation and provincial government cutbacks have created a \$5-million deficit for the Quinte Healthcare Corp;

"Whereas any reduction in hospital and health care services in each of the aforementioned communities is completely unacceptable;

"Whereas this provincial government promised to ensure that the effect of amalgamation would not result in any reduction of health care or hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Instruct Premier Mike Harris and Health Minister Tony Clement to provide enough funding to the Quinte Healthcare Corp that will cover the projected \$5-million deficit and ensure that quality health care and hospital

services in the long term will continue in Bancroft, Belleville, Picton and Quinte West."

I am pleased to add my signature to this petition.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Consideration of the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I move, seconded by Ted Arnott, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has addressed to us.

1650

Before I begin I'd like to indicate that I will be sharing my time with the member for Waterloo-Wellington.

It is my pleasure to stand for the first time in this House on behalf of the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka and move the motion for the adoption of the address by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor. I stand before the second session of the 37th Parliament with the highest sense of honour and responsibility. I am humbled by the confidence shown in me by the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka in the by-election just over a month ago. The support they demonstrated for me is also support for this government and the actions it has taken to get our riding and Ontario back on track. I can say with confidence that the electorate in Parry Sound-Muskoka supports the plan for a brighter future that was articulated by Her Honour in the speech from the throne.

Parry Sound-Muskoka is a large riding, made up of the diverse and varied views of more than 80,000 people. As their MPP, my goal is to be accountable to and available for each of them. It is my sincere hope that I am able to serve the riding with the same dedication and commitment as those who were elected before me, most of whom, I might add, sat as members of Conservative governments.

My predecessor, Ernie Eves, has a record of loyal public service that spans two decades as MPP for Parry Sound and then for Parry Sound-Muskoka. His contribution to our riding, to this government and indeed to the entire province is evident in the many advances we enjoy at home and across this province. We owe a debt of gratitude to Ernie for ensuring economic prosperity for all of the people of this province today and in the future.

My friend—and my lawyer—Bill Grimmett, who sat with many in this House, worked hard for the people of Muskoka-Georgian Bay, always putting the needs of his constituents first. Many others, like Ali Johnston, Robert

Boyer, Lorne Maeck, Ken Black and Dan Waters have set a precedent for public service that I strive to achieve.

My greatest inspiration is a man who represented the Muskoka riding with distinction and sat in this Legislature for 15 years. That man was my father. Through his dedication to family and to all the people he served, he taught me the commitment and caring it takes to be a strong representative. I am proud of the contribution he made to Ontario and I am especially proud to have this opportunity to serve as he did.

Those of you present realize it is not an easy task to give a major speech following the Lieutenant Governor's important address. I said during the recent campaign that I was not a politician or a public speaker. Today, I can safely say I am only one of these. So in preparing for this speech I looked to the words of many, including the Hansard of my father's maiden speech, given under similar circumstances in March 1972.

I noted that during his speech there were many interjections by the former member for Sudbury East, Mr Martel. Mr Speaker, let me say that I look forward to that kind of lively exchange with his daughter, the member for Nickel Belt—a second-generation debate.

In fact, I look forward to getting to know and working with members on both sides of this House. We are all here to make this province a better place for the people we represent. To paraphrase my father: the quality of the government is the sum total of the individual members' ability. Men and women of goodwill, common sense and ability are to be found in all three parties. It just so happens that the most people with these admirable traits happen to be of the same political persuasion as the Premier.

Proudly, I too sit as a member of the Progressive Conservative government led by Premier Mike Harris. I am fortunate to represent what I believe is the most vibrant and desirable area of the province. The rugged beauty of Parry Sound-Muskoka, as captured in the paintings of the Group of Seven, is renowned worldwide.

Throughout history, our natural resources and the resourcefulness of our people have combined to create a unique balance of industry and environmental protection that has served to make Parry Sound-Muskoka a riding of enterprise and opportunity. Our lakes and trees have been the source of much of this development. In 1894, our region was one of the first in Ontario to generate hydro-electric power for municipal use. Our forefathers pioneered methods of floating logs to mills and markets that expanded and improved the lumber industry. We supplied ships for the war effort and wooden boats that are still valued and collected across the continent. We built shipyards, homes and businesses, but most importantly, we built a foundation for a prosperous future.

Since 1858, when the first bridge was built across the Severn River to open up the settlement road, Parry Sound and Muskoka have been more than just popular vacation destinations; they have played an important role in the building of a nation. We welcomed people from England, Europe and Iceland, and were the gateway to the west as

settlers travelled by land across Muskoka and then by ship from Parry Sound to western Canada.

There were many, however, who recognized the natural beauty and the potential of our area and chose to stay. My ancestors were among those who settled there. Five generations of my family have called our region home. Proudly, I too chose to make it home, and I am committed to ensuring that my children and their children will have the same choice to stay in Parry Sound-Muskoka.

This government has done a great deal to improve the quality of life in our area and to create opportunities today for generations to come. In the words of Her Honour, "Since 1995, the government's plan to improve the lives of Ontario families has been consistent and clear. The plan is to strengthen the economy by cutting taxes, reducing red tape and eliminating barriers to economic growth." In Parry Sound-Muskoka, we are seeing the benefits of this plan.

In Thursday's speech, our government's commitment to preserving Ontario's rugged beauty and protecting its rich natural resources was reiterated. While that is an important priority for all of Ontario, it is especially important in Parry Sound-Muskoka, where tourism and reliance on natural qualities is our lifeblood. Tourism is a natural business for Parry Sound-Muskoka. It is our main industry, and we are the second-largest tourist destination in Canada. The government has encouraged the growth of that industry in our area. It has supported tourism marketing efforts, helped fund infrastructure improvements and, most importantly, created a business environment that has allowed people and businesses to succeed. I worked in this industry for the past 23 years, and the year 2000 was the best in that time.

As the link between northern Ontario and the south, our roads support an enormous volume of traffic. The volume increases in the summer months as visitors come to cottage country. The four-laning of highways 69 and 11 currently underway will improve safety, widen the gateways to the north and help the tourism sector by increasing accessibility to our region.

This government's Smart Growth vision announced on Thursday will help to sustain the important balance between industry and the environment that will ensure we maintain the beauty that makes Parry Sound-Muskoka unique and, at the same time, grow our economy.

The northern Ontario heritage fund has benefited our riding through investments in infrastructure like water and sewer projects, community centres, roads and bridges. The doubling of the fund to \$60 million annually opens up further opportunities for municipalities in our region to access assistance for priority projects. Northern Ontario heritage fund investment helped bring a natural gas pipeline to Parry Sound. This has been a huge benefit for local industries like Georgian Bay Forest Products, which I toured in the campaign.

Despite opposition from the parties across the floor, this government recognizes the unique challenges faced across our electoral district and recently made Muskoka



part of northern Ontario. This enabled the township of Muskoka Lakes to apply for funding to make its arena wheelchair-accessible, and it allowed the town of Gravenhurst to apply for funding for its wharf project. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines has opened an office in Huntsville. I met with Bracebridge town officials last week, and they said how helpful the staff in this new office has been to them.

**1700**

Our government has made health care a priority across Parry Sound-Muskoka through the expansion and modernization of our hospitals and investments in ambulance services, nursing stations and long-term-care facilities. The reopening of the health centre in Burk's Falls, the new hospital planned for Parry Sound, the recently opened wing at the Bracebridge hospital, the new day-care surgery unit announced last month for Huntsville and the opening of 30 new long-term-care beds which I attended on Saturday would not have been possible without our government's support.

Health care reform is a large and complex undertaking, especially as technology changes and our population ages. This government has worked hard to ensure that the health care services provided to Ontarians are relevant and accessible, both for today and into the future.

As was pointed out by Her Honour, health care spending is currently 44% of total program spending and will increase to 60% of the Ontario government's operating budget if it continues to increase at the current rate. I support the government in its efforts to make spending in health care more accountable.

As the father of four children in Ontario's public education system—two in elementary school and two in high school—I support more flexibility and choice for parents, teachers and principals to do what is best for students.

Excellence among teachers, leadership by principals and the influence of parents do make a difference. My children have great teachers, are learning a lot, and I support our government's initiative to encourage school boards to reward high-performing teachers and principals.

As many of you know, the recent labour dispute between the Near North board of education and the support workers' union has recently been sent to arbitration. After a difficult month, school has resumed for thousands of children in the Parry Sound and Nipissing districts.

I support the many concerned parents who contacted me throughout the strike and their belief that school boards and their employees should ensure that the best interests of our children are always a top priority and that the closure of schools be avoided at all costs.

As a government, we will continue to make the investments and decisions necessary to give our children the best education possible and ensure they have the tools they need to succeed.

But only a strong economy allows us to invest in those priorities like health care and education. This is central to my beliefs and it is why I chose to run as a Progressive Conservative to represent the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka. Removing barriers to economic growth is essential to our government's plan and will go a long way to improving the standard of living and creating opportunities now and for future generations.

When my father gave his maiden speech in 1972, Ontario enjoyed the lowest personal income tax rate in Canada. You will recall that subsequent Liberal and NDP governments believed that taxes went only one way, and that was up, so they increased taxes time and time again until we in Ontario went from being the lowest-taxed jurisdiction in the country to being the highest. No matter how hard people worked, they were taking home less and less. Jobs were lost, welfare rolls swelled and families struggled to make ends meet.

Since 1995, the Mike Harris government has taken aggressive action to give hard-working Ontarians a break and get this province back on track by leading all other governments in tax cuts. Since 1995, more than 2,750 people have moved off welfare and into the workforce in Parry Sound-Muskoka. That is a drop in welfare cases of over 70%.

This past Saturday, while flipping pancakes with the Premier in Powassan, I had first-hand experience of this success. I met a constituent on the main street and he said, "Mike Harris is a good guy. He helped me out. I was unemployed and he helped me get my A licence through the work-for-welfare program, and I now have a job."

Our government's plan will continue to give people a hand up, not a handout, and create more jobs in our riding and across Ontario.

Just as this government's policies have made a positive difference for the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka since 1995, the plan announced in the throne speech last week will further assist in creating jobs and opportunities for people who live there, by continuing to honour its tax cut pledge, by further eliminating red tape for small business, by ensuring sustainable health care and quality education, by providing additional support for economic growth in rural Ontario and the north. Our plan will protect the gains that we have made over the last six years and set the stage for an even brighter future.

I dedicate myself to the goals of this government, shared by the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka: excellence in education, quality health care, the dignity that comes from a job, a high standard of living and hope and opportunity for all.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Further debate.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** It is an honour and a privilege to rise in this historic chamber this afternoon on behalf of my constituents and second the motion that graciously receives Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor's speech from the throne. At the outset, I want to indicate that I'll be sharing my time with

my friend the member for Mississauga South, and I wish to thank my executive assistant here at Queen's Park, Andrew Juby, who has helped me organize my thoughts for presentation this afternoon.

I am pleased to second the motion made by our newest member, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, and I want to offer him hearty congratulations on his election victory and welcome him to this House. I was pleased to spend some time during the by-election to show my support for the member. I know that he is very well regarded by the people he's privileged to represent and he has the honour of following a very strong tradition of representation for that area, notably his father, former Premier Frank Miller, and our former Deputy Premier and Treasurer, my friend Ernie Eves.

In speaking to last Thursday's throne speech, which had as its theme 21 steps to the 21st century, I would like to make the end our beginning for my constituents in the great riding of Waterloo-Wellington, for it is in the 21st and final step referenced in the throne speech that this government commits to an enhanced role for MPPs and so recognizes the solemn obligation each MPP has to represent the needs, hopes and best interests of his or her constituents.

In my view, one of the fundamental principles that guide and motivate the changes that we are making is that a government in a modern, pluralistic democracy rarely, if ever, knows better than the citizens that it represents. We must listen and act upon the advice of our informed citizenry—our constituents who sent us here.

Since 1995 we have streamlined government and brought back fiscal responsibility and accountability. We did it because we know that's how the average family in Ontario lives and that is how they expect their government to operate and those are the principles of a government that serves the public, not itself.

Enhancing the role of MPPs is therefore a positive step toward realizing this goal: that point where government doesn't fully intrude so far into its agenda that it is not heeding the guidance and wisdom on an ongoing basis of the people that each member of provincial Parliament represents.

I am very privileged to represent a riding that is as blessed with a strong history, tremendous geography and a diversity of people and industry as is Waterloo-Wellington. Without a doubt, it is the people of my riding who are my greatest resource in doing my job as an MPP. Their advice and encouragement inspires me to work hard on their behalf and to fight for them when it's necessary to do so, whether it be from the opposition benches or from the government benches. I have taken note of their concerns about government debt, quality health care and education and the need to protect the environment and make our communities safe.

Whether at a council meeting in Wellesley township, a doughnut shop in Elmira, the chamber of commerce in Kitchener-Waterloo or after I've attended church in Fergus, I find the advice I receive from my constituents to be filled with infinite wisdom. It is with the advice of

my constituents, through direct discussion and surveys of their opinion, that I endeavour to raise constructive ideas within the government caucus, with the Premier and with the cabinet, ideas which originate from the values so abundant in our riding, values of honesty, family, love, compassion for others and a strong work ethic, the values that built Waterloo-Wellington, that built our province and that built our country, timeless values we must forever embrace, for they are the reference point for our continued efforts to build a better province with opportunity for all—for the single mother in New Hamburg struggling to give her child a better life; for the senior citizens on fixed incomes who worry about their health and the escalating cost of living; for the crippled person in a wheelchair who can't get into an old public building because it doesn't have a ramp; for the farmer who faces low commodity prices for his crops and an unsympathetic banker; for the teacher who is sick and tired of the fight between her union and the government because she just wants to teach kids; for the small business person struggling 16 hours a day and struggling to survive; for the university student working part-time to pay tuition while studying; for the infant baby born in Kitchener tonight whose parents lack the skills they need to give her the best possible start in life; for the alcoholic living in a cardboard box on a street in Toronto who needs a hand up. We must never overlook these people and write them off because they may not have voted for us. For if we do, our claim to be the rightful governing party in Ontario is diminished and we betray those timeless values I mentioned a moment ago.

1710

But reconciling the competing interests in Ontario's politics is never easy. We must balance our program spending with the ability of the beleaguered taxpayer to foot the bill, such that our tax levels are stimulating economic growth and progress, not retarding it. Returning to deficit financing and adding to our accumulated debt in good economic times is simply not an option. This is why I continue to call upon the government to commit itself to a concrete, long-term debt repayment plan with five-year interim targets. I have repeatedly raised this idea since this House passed my private member's resolution on this subject. Members may recall that resolution, which passed with support from all three parties in late 1997.

I was encouraged when our party's 1999 election platform included a commitment to a \$2-billion payment against the debt—encouraged but not wholly satisfied. I continue to insist that debt repayment must be taken more seriously by the provincial government. This commitment was increased in the last budget to a \$5-billion debt retirement payment during this term of office. I believe the government's commitment to begin to pay down the debt was made with some understanding that it is sound fiscal policy to pay back what we owe and that we must address the huge financial burden we are passing along to our children and grandchildren through a \$112-billion provincial debt.



My constituents in Waterloo-Wellington are astounded by the fact that interest charges on Ontario's debt now cost more than funding for Ontario's hospitals, and they want to know that the government is taking long-range steps to eliminate this enormous fiscal burden we inherited from previous administrations. In my 1999 survey of Waterloo-Wellington residents, close to two thirds of my constituents who responded said that paying down the debt should be the government's number one fiscal priority, far ahead of tax cuts. Consistent with their ethics on economic responsibility, they believe that during good economic times you pay down what you owe, period.

The speech from the throne recognizes their principles in that regard by making paying down the debt a higher priority, and I know they will be more confident about Ontario's fiscal integrity in the future when the government puts in place a concrete, long-term plan to eliminate the debt. We're hopeful that such a plan will be outlined in the provincial budget on May 9.

We in Waterloo-Wellington understand as well the crucial importance of attracting investment that creates new jobs, and we know that corporations and capital can bail out as easily as they buy in. The global economy is more mobile and competitive than it has ever been, and it's our duty to continue to create as competitive a tax structure as we possibly can.

To attract high-quality, high-paying jobs in industries that grow, we also have to implement strategies for economic development that strengthen our regional economies for the long term. In discussing strong and wise economic leadership that works to encourage the creation of sustainable jobs, I look back to 1991. I had been an MPP for about a year at that time, and a new approach to economic development was emerging for our nation's leaders. I first learned of this theory from a study conducted for the federal government, called *Canada at the Crossroads: The Reality of a New Competitive Environment*. This report, headed up by Michael Porter, a professor of business administration at Harvard University, identified weaknesses in economic development policies and put forth a new direction to build strong regional economies by fostering strong interdependent business clusters. Up to that point, the most popular economic development strategy was known as diversification, which we've all heard of, which simply tried to locate all types of businesses everywhere, regardless of whether the network or geography existed to support them. We were uncompetitive, while the economies around the world were coming together in a globally oriented marketplace. We were missing job-creating opportunities.

Porter illustrated this weakness by looking at the automotive industry in Ontario. Although Ontario had a considerable number of jobs in that sector, we had a noticeable scarcity in supply industries that would sustain and keep the auto plants competitive. To me, this meant that jobs not sustained by a strong network would always be at risk. If things didn't change, those jobs could easily be moved elsewhere in the world. The solution was to

develop clusters in a competitive environment that enabled industries to flourish as part of the network. In this way, a region's potentialities are transformed into goals because they become competitive advantages.

Something else happened in the 1990s in our part of Ontario: Honda set up an assembly plant in Alliston, and Toyota located in Cambridge. Since then, working partnerships with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, where I formerly served for about three and a half years as parliamentary assistant, have helped to encourage the supply-line industries that are flourishing as a part of a broader cluster that is poised for an even stronger future.

Last year in Elmira we celebrated the opening of YM Technologies, a supplier for Honda. In Palmerston we broke ground for the building of TG Minto, a parts supplier for the Toyota plant in Cambridge. Auto parts plants are running strong throughout our area. We have Musashi in Arthur, Jefferson Elora in Elora, and Long Manufacturing in Mount Forest, as well as Denso in Guelph, all of which have opened in the past five or six years.

Whether we look at the high-tech or automotive industries, our clusters are gaining momentum. The supply-line industries are growing, jobs are being created and those jobs are high-paying and more sustainable because they are more competitive. We need to continue to build upon regional economic strengths and potential strengths for the future in order to protect our jobs and create the new jobs we want to see created.

The throne speech makes reference to measures which are aimed at making government work better for the people it serves. This is also a key part of our pro-growth strategy. My constituents expect value for their tax dollars and understand that wise management and allocation of those dollars can create better results, more of the services they were intended to provide and a government that serves the public well because it is lean and efficient.

The government is augmenting this effort by signalling its intent to strike a task force to examine the appropriate role and place for government, looking at the services we need to deliver, and may in some instances suggest we should divest ourselves from providing services that might be more appropriately delivered by private companies in a competitive environment. It is my hope that this task force will hear good advice and strengthen the outlook for our government and how it contributes to the province's quality of life.

When I think of the need for the government to re-examine its appropriate functions, I can currently see no more appropriate a case study than that of the Conestoga dam, located in my riding. Described recently in the *Globe and Mail* as one of Ontario's largest dams, the Conestoga dam controls waterflow for the Conestoga River and the Grand River, affecting the water supply and water quality for the people in the region of Waterloo and the city of Brantford. The gates on this dam, which are normally opened and closed to control waterflow, are broken, and somewhere between \$1.2 million and \$1.5

million is needed to repair them. Without repairs there is a risk of a major catastrophe.

In the spring the dam controls the excess water to prevent flooding. Without the needed repairs the dam could fail, resulting in a catastrophic flash flood in which lives most likely would be lost.

In the summer, when the waterflow is low, the dam gates are opened to raise the levels and cleanse the water downstream. If there is a drought, which we have experienced as we know in recent years, drinking water that we take for granted could become dangerous.

Granted, these are worst-case scenarios. But they are identified as realistic by the engineers and leaders of the Grand River Conservation Authority, and I take them seriously and continue to advocate on their behalf. They, along with municipalities I am representing, have a well-founded belief that it is the province's role to be a major partner in paying for the needed repairs to those gates to make absolutely certain that these worst-case scenarios never happen. I support their position.

I have appreciated the opportunity to discuss this matter with the Premier, in a private meeting I had with him in February, and with our government caucus. I want to thank the Minister of Natural Resources for meeting with representatives of the Grand River Conservation Authority for further discussions. The minister also participated in a more recent follow-up meeting that I arranged with David Lindsay, President and CEO of the SuperBuild Corp, again with the conservation authority's representatives.

Our position on this matter is clear: the province of Ontario cannot abdicate its responsibility to assist conservation authorities in necessary flood-control projects. It is of the utmost importance to the riding of Waterloo-Wellington, and I will continue to raise this issue until it is satisfactorily resolved.

The throne speech is clear on another matter. It highlighted the fact that the government is working to improve the quality of life for all our citizens and in all our regions. I am pleased that this includes an effort to promote economic development in regions that have not yet shared in the prosperity that much of the province has enjoyed since 1995, such as parts of rural Ontario and northern Ontario.

1720

I think this also grants us an opportunity to express our appreciation to our farm families. They provide us with a high-quality, safe and nutritious food product at affordable prices and an excellent quality of life in our communities, in my riding and throughout the province.

Many grains and oilseeds farmers have faced the possibility of being thrown out of business by global market forces beyond their control, including rich subsidies in the United States and Europe. I met with and listened to farm leaders from our farm organizations and I firmly supported getting their concerns on to the government's agenda.

I want to commend the new Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for his leadership and for the fact

that the Ontario government has contributed significantly more safety net funding for grains and oilseeds than we normally would be obligated to do under the conventional funding formula.

The throne speech also addresses new opportunities for improvement in the field of education, where we wish to empower local educators with more flexibility on what materials they use to teach and providing parents with greater school choice. These goals should complement each other by raising accountability and ultimately the quality of the education our children receive. Continuing improvement in education is not a luxury. In a highly competitive world it is a necessity. That is why I was very encouraged by the proposal to encourage boards to reward our finest teachers and principals.

In my 1999 Keeping in Touch newsletter survey I posed a question including all the pros and cons of performance-based pay for teachers. My constituents were very supportive of performance pay for teachers. Almost two thirds of the respondents indicated support for rewarding our best teachers through pay for performance. I shared this information with the Premier and our caucus, and from the Premier's response it was very clear that he was very receptive and supportive of my constituents' views on this matter.

Along with measures that enhance the quality of education, the government is also committed to restoring the full educational experience or what are known as extracurricular activities. I believe that this can be done, but it can only be done with a reasonable compromise on both sides: by the teachers' federations and by the government.

Last year I spoke as forcefully as I could within caucus to encourage a reasonable compromise that would hopefully lead to the resumption of extracurricular activities. I suggested that Bill 74 be amended if teachers' unions agreed to resume the extracurricular activities that they had formerly led and organized and if they stopped using the withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal of extracurricular activities as a bargaining chip. The government responded by deciding not to proclaim the section of Bill 74 which would have made these after-school activities a mandatory job requirement for teachers as a gesture of goodwill.

Last month, the Advisory Group on Co-Instructional Activities finished its report, which I understand is subject to further study. I am hopeful that the group's advice will have a positive bearing on the effort to resolve the standoff.

It is my belief that a mediator is needed, someone with whom both sides may invest their trust, to work through recommendations from the advisory group or lay out a new course for a solution.

Last week I wrote to the Premier and copied the Minister of Education to suggest that the government ask our former Premier, the Honourable William G. Davis, to serve in an intermediary capacity aimed at restoring a full educational experience, including extracurricular activities, for Ontario students and the requisite positive environment for all concerned. If Mr Davis is unable to



serve, perhaps Dr Bette Stephenson, our former Deputy Premier, might be prepared to do so, or some other person who has the respect and confidence of both parties to this dispute. I have offered this suggestion in the full knowledge that my constituents believe that we need to resolve this problem in the interests of students and end the war of words which is counterproductive to creating the quality education system that children need and deserve.

Ontario's children deserve the best. The commitment to build upon programs like the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children initiative will improve the prospects of more of Ontario's most vulnerable children. The Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program is helping families in my riding ensure that their children reach their full potential, and I look forward to enhanced services through the proposed early years centres that were referenced in the throne speech.

In 1998, the Legislature debated and passed my resolution which was aimed at highlighting this initiative and supporting the former health minister in her effort to make wise investments which will lead to better health outcomes in the.

Following my resolution's passage, the next provincial budget committed the government to increase the funding for Healthy Babies, Healthy Children by fivefold, from \$10 million annually to \$50 million annually. This year, the budget for this program was further increased to \$67 million a year, enabling us to help more families better and longer.

A healthy beginning in life is crucial and so is strong development throughout childhood. That is why the Ontario's Promise program is, in my opinion, potentially the single most significant initiative that our government has undertaken since we were re-elected about two years ago. I say this because, like President John F. Kennedy's Peace Corps idea, Ontario's Promise has the potential to light the fire of idealism and spirit of service throughout an entire generation of young people, benefiting our province for many years to come.

Ontario's Promise was launched in Toronto last fall by the Premier of Ontario and the Honourable Margaret Marland, minister responsible for children. I was privileged to be there as well as one of the towering world figures of our time, retired US General Colin Powell, endorsed our plan to bring businesses, non-profit agencies serving children, community leaders, parents and individuals together to make and keep five promises to the province's young people. This is what Ontario's Promise is all about: building partnerships for children and youth and making commitments to them that we keep.

The heart of Ontario's Promise is a set of five basic interlocking, mutually reinforcing promises. Essentially, we promise to connect every child in Ontario with the minimum requirements they need to grow up into confident, capable and contributing adult members of our society.

These are the five promises: first, a healthy start; second, an ongoing relationship with a caring adult—a

parent, mentor, tutor, coach or other responsible grown-up who is willing to take an interest in a child; third, a safe place with structured activities during non-school hours; fourth, marketable skills through an effective education; and fifth, an opportunity to give back through community service. By learning the satisfaction of serving others, young people can also learn to value themselves.

In my recent address to the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, I appealed to business leaders to get involved, to encourage their employees to get involved, and to make a worthwhile difference in the lives of Ontario's children. I would like to suggest again, having raised this subject in the Legislature last fall, that all members support Ontario's Promise in any way that you can.

As the government looks ahead to how it can ensure that all people have access to high-quality health care, it is important to acknowledge strong leadership that has brought us to this vantage point. I want to acknowledge the vision and leadership of the former health minister, the member for Kitchener-Waterloo, who laid the groundwork for the greater efficiencies that are to be realized even as patient care has been improved. Our health dollars are spent as wisely as possible, and we have seen an unprecedented expansion of health care services in the province of Ontario. The health portfolio is, in my view, the single most challenging and difficult position in the cabinet. I wish the new minister the very best in his role in dealing with the challenges that await him as further efficiencies are found.

The Ontario Hospital Association president, David MacKinnon, was last week quoted in the *Globe and Mail* as saying, "Hospitals have deficits because they are serving more people who are ill, not because of irresponsible spending." To a substantial degree, I agree with Mr MacKinnon's statement. This is one of the perspectives the new minister must confront. In reality, there are increasing demands being placed on hospitals which must be met. At the same time, there should be no blank cheque in the system, and the taxpayers expect a streamlined health care system that is as affordable as it is widely available.

I am strongly supportive of the call in the throne speech to move toward a national dialogue on restoring the 50-50 funding principle on which medicare was founded in the 1960s. Members may recall that I brought forward a resolution in 1999 calling for a full restoration of the funds that the federal government had cut from health care. In practical terms, it called for a restoration of the funding cut through the Canada health and social transfers since 1994-95, as well as establishing the need for an escalator clause to ensure that funding increases will keep pace with increasing costs. That position was championed by the former health minister and was eventually adopted as policy by all of the provincial governments of Canada.

1730

A year and a week ago, this Legislature passed my resolution with support from all parties and, in the fall of

2000, on the very eve of a federal election, the government of Canada came forward with a partial restoration of their cuts to health care and social services.

Canadians expect the federal government to provide an appropriate and responsible level of support for health care. While the partial restoration of the Canada health and social transfer is appreciated, it has by no means closed this file.

In 1994-95, the federal share for health and social services in Ontario was 18 cents on the dollar. Even with the partial restoration of funding previously cut, today the federal share of health and social services in Ontario is a miserly 13 cents on the dollar. Clearly, more needs to be done to restore a fair apportionment of health costs between the provinces and the government of Canada.

The federal government was wise to name a former Premier of Saskatchewan, Roy Romanow, who I think all of us respect, to head a commission on the future of medicare. However, Ontario's system cannot wait until the end of the year 2002 when the commission is expected to conclude its deliberations.

As I conclude, I will end with a new beginning on behalf of my constituents in Waterloo-Wellington and mention how pleased I was last month to have been named as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment. I am thrilled with the new challenges that lie ahead as we move forward, and I hope to contribute in a positive way to a vision of an Ontario that is a world leader in the sustainable protection of our environment, where the ministry and the whole government act as a guardian, promoting better human health through practices which guarantee the best possible ways of protecting our air, our water and our land. These, I believe, are important steps to take if we are to uphold Ontario as the best place to live, work and raise a family now and for future generations.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just to clarify, although this is extraordinarily unusual, under our new rules it is permitted that the time be split during this section of the debate. Normally in the past we just had the speech moved and seconded, but now we are permitting more speakers.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I do realize it is unusual, Mr Speaker. I was very pleased to be asked to speak in this debate, and I consider it a privilege and an honour because of the fact that this throne speech does indeed bring us into the 21st century with a great deal of hope and promise.

First of all, I would like to congratulate my colleague Norm Miller, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka. I welcome this member as a colleague in our caucus. As I said to him after his speech a few minutes ago, my maiden speech also was the privilege of moving the throne speech. However, the outcome of my motion became quite historic actually because I moved the throne speech in 1985, at which time the Conservatives had 52 seats and the Liberals had 48 seats and, with the help of the New Democratic Party, of course the Conservative Party, after 42 years as the government of

this beautiful province, was actually defeated. My colleague Norm Miller doesn't have that concern or worry, because now this government, and indeed this party, this marvellous PC Party of Ontario, is of course into the first six years of their next 42 years of government in this province.

I also feel it's a privilege to follow my colleague Ted Arnott, the member for Waterloo-Wellington. I believe if there is one member in the Legislature of all three parties who is totally direct, objective, honest and fair about the representations of his constituents in this Legislature, it has always been my colleague and friend Ted Arnott.

What a difficult job this is that we all share, on all sides of the House, as elected representatives. But also what an honour it is for us to be in this place. I say simply that I can't believe now that I'm in my 17th year in this chamber, that here I am again speaking with the opportunity that we are given in debate in this place in the interests of the people we serve. I say simply to all my colleagues that the moment we forget why we're here, we lose and don't deserve to retain the faith and trust that the electorate put in our responsibility as elected members.

I say that, frankly, whether we are in the opposition—because surely I know; I served in opposition for 10 years, but I recognize that more than anything else we are successful in terms of the future of this province whatever role we play, and I mean that very sincerely. As opposition members we have a very serious role to play and of course it goes without saying that as government members that responsibility is enormous.

When I look back at this throne speech, which I had the pleasure of reading over the weekend, I think about where we are today in Ontario and the fact that for now into our sixth year we have had a Premier in this province with tremendous vision and frankly tremendous courage. It has not been an easy journey. It has frankly not been a job that I think any of us has envied. Yet Premier Mike Harris has been solely the captain of this ship and he has had that courage to make the most difficult decisions that needed to be made at this point in our history when we became the government in 1995.

What a tremendous achievement that was, because we were 20 members in a caucus sitting as third party; we went from 20 members to 82 members as government. Frankly, I give the success of that achievement to all of those who have worked very hard for this party and this province and particularly the 20 members of that caucus from 1990 to 1995, wonderfully endorsed by the actions, the leadership and the policy that was developed by our party, which Premier Mike Harris led us to victory with.

I may say that I don't think anyone realizes what great personal cost there is to that kind of dedicated service. Certainly this Premier is no exception in terms of the situations he has had to endure from time to time, as my colleagues in cabinet do from time to time, when issues become the focus of a great deal of concern in the province, because change is not easy. To make the right decisions, and again I say to have the courage to make



the changes, is a strength in a leader above all other strengths that is needed. In this Premier, Mike Harris, we have such a person.

1740

I also would like to say that I have felt very honoured to have had the opportunity to serve in the cabinet of Premier Mike Harris for the last three and a half years. It was indeed a wonderful experience after my, at that point, I suppose, almost 24 years in elected public office. To be appointed as Ontario's first ever minister responsible for children opened for me personally and for everyone who was part of our team within our caucus, within cabinet, and certainly within our staff, truly an opportunity to make a difference for the future of our children in Ontario. My deepest hope is that those programs which we initiated will blossom and expand and, as my colleague the member for Waterloo-Wellington has said, grow successfully to be the solution for the children and youth in Ontario. Certainly Ontario's Promise and the early years program obviously are two programs that I personally feel very passionate about because we see in those programs a future for children in Ontario that indeed is different from the future they had before.

The children and youth of this province deserve to have a future of security and hope and opportunity. I know that, as this government continues its commitment to children and youth, that will happen. I feel very assured about that.

I would like to briefly say that, as the member for Mississauga South, it's very exciting when we talk about job creation in terms of our local ridings. We have this incredible number today of 822,000 new jobs in this province that have come here and are now a fact of the last six years of our government. Frankly, I was very thrilled when we called to find out how many of those jobs were in Mississauga South.

Mississauga South actually is not a riding that is full of commerce and industry and business, but we still, in that number of years since 1995, have had new or expanded businesses which have created over 2,000 jobs just in our riding alone. I look at Astra Zeneca, 500 new jobs; Petro-Canada, 200 new jobs; Bodycote Ortech, 200 jobs that were retained when Ortech was sold; MFP Financial Services, which is equipment leasing, 100 new jobs; the Waterside Inn, which is a brand new hotel in Mississauga South, 150 new jobs. The Waterside Inn is very interesting because it's actually owned by Dr Bill James and his wife Astride.

Electrofuel is a new manufacturer of rechargeable batteries, 150 new jobs; an expansion of the Xerox development centre, 20 new jobs; Adamson Associates, architects, 50 new jobs; Toronto Fabricating, a cast metal manufacturer, 20 new jobs; Cancom Communications Satellite, actually a company the Premier and I had the opportunity to visit not very long ago—they are the main company for satellite communications in—100 new jobs in Mississauga South. Of course Orion Bus Industries had an expansion when they moved into the riding, and they have 250 new jobs. Finally, Royal Laser Tech, on

Lakeshore Road, is a new manufacturer of laser metal cutting—300 new jobs.

That has happened because of the climate our government has created, the fact that we amended those labour laws that stifled investment in this province, the fact that we have been able to create an environment that has encouraged investment in business and commerce and industry in Ontario. I'm very proud of the fact that that has turned around to the point where in the last two years Ontario's economy outperformed that of each G7 nation. Can you imagine that kind of achievement? We are proud of the fact that that has happened during our first five years as government.

When we're looking at caring about people, the people who live and work and raise families in Ontario, the other number I think is very significant is that we're moving up very quickly to almost 600,000 people who are no longer in the cycle of dependency on welfare. Six hundred thousand people is slightly less than the population of Mississauga. When I drive around Mississauga and look at the growth, development and jobs and the employees-wanted ads in store windows and office buildings and so forth, I think, yes, we have given those people who previously were on welfare an opportunity to live lives that give them their own self-esteem, the opportunity for their children to have parents who work like other parents do. There really isn't a better legacy we can leave these children and youth than to have parents who are role models with a work ethic because, again, we had the courage to change the direction of welfare dependency in this province.

I know I am just about out of time. I want to end by saying that I know we have this tremendous crisis ahead of us in terms of the increasing cost of health care. I saw the numbers in this throne speech in terms of the percentage of growth we are going to be faced with—27% in the last five years and a 19% increase in the next two years alone.

As a recipient of \$30,000 or \$40,000—I don't know how much open-heart surgery costs in this province, but as a recipient of life-saving surgery two years ago, I know first-hand that we have a world-class health care system in this province, and I know that with the increasing costs associated with the growing number and percentage of our population that is aging, we will also have to make some very difficult decisions there. When we make the decisions, it will only be for the reason to guarantee that there will always be universal access for patients in this province, no matter where they live or who they are. Certainly when I was in the hospital, I was thrilled to find that everyone who was there appreciated the fact that they had the opportunity, in 1999, to have access to that kind of life-saving remedy.

While this is all ahead of us, I frankly have tremendous conviction and satisfaction and confidence that the future of this province, through the 21-step plan in the throne speech, is secure because of the leadership of this caucus and this Premier in Ontario today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Shall the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** I move that the House do now adjourn.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Shall the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock this evening.

*The House adjourned at 1751.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*



<b>School closures</b>			
Mrs Pupatello .....	36		
<b>Hospital restructuring</b>			
Mr Parsons .....	37		
<b>THRONE SPEECH DEBATE</b>			
Mr Miller .....	37		
Mr Arnott .....	40		
Mrs Marland .....	44		
Debate adjourned .....	46		
<b>OTHER BUSINESS</b>			
<b>Report, Integrity Commissioner</b>			
The Speaker .....	10	<b>Report, Standing Committee on Government Agencies</b>	
		The Speaker .....	10
		<b>Report, Integrity Commissioner</b>	
		The Speaker .....	10
		<b>Request for report of Integrity Commissioner</b>	
		The Speaker .....	10
		<b>Appointment of interim Integrity Commissioner</b>	
		The Speaker .....	10
		<b>Attendance of members</b>	
		The Speaker .....	10
		Mr Duncan .....	10
		<b>Visitor</b>	
		The Speaker .....	14
		<b>Al Palladini</b>	
		Mr Tsubouchi .....	14
		Mr Phillips .....	15
		Mr Hampton .....	16
		<b>Ellen MacKinnon</b>	
		Mr Hampton .....	16
		Mr Beaubien .....	16
		Mr Bradley .....	17
		<b>Wilf Spooner</b>	
		Mr Sterling .....	18
		Mr Ramsay .....	18
		Mr Bisson .....	19

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi avril 23, 2001

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'obligation de rendre compte des voyages ministériels, projet de loi 2, M. Bartolucci</b>	
Adoptée .....	11
<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'eau potable saine, projet de loi 3, M<sup>me</sup> Churley</b>	
Adoptée .....	11
<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'épargne en prévision de l'avenir de nos enfants (modification de la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu), projet de loi 4, M. Hastings</b>	
Adoptée .....	12
<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur la vérification des comptes publics, projet de loi 5, M. Gerretsen</b>	
Adoptée .....	12
<b>Loi de 2001 sur la protection des mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites, projet de loi 6, M. Wood</b>	
Adoptée .....	12
<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur la divulgation des traitements dans le secteur public (favoritisme), projet de loi 7, M. Bartolucci</b>	
Adoptée .....	12
<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'hymne national du Canada, projet de loi 8, M. Colle</b>	
Adoptée .....	13

QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Prestation de services électroniques</b>	
M. Beaubien .....	32

# CONTENTS

Monday April 23, 2001

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Chris Hadfield</b>	
Ms Di Cocco .....	7
<b>Holocaust Memorial Day</b>	
Mr Chudleigh .....	7
<b>Children's services</b>	
Mrs Dombrowsky .....	7
<b>Organ donation</b>	
Mr Gilchrist .....	8
<b>Northern health services</b>	
Mr Gravelle .....	8
Ms Martel .....	8
<b>Sex offender registry</b>	
Mr Gill .....	8
<b>Premier's attendance</b>	
Mr Duncan .....	9
The Speaker .....	9
<b>Conestoga College</b>	
Mr Arnott .....	9

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Ministerial Travel Accountability Act, 2001, Bill 2, Mr Bartolucci</b>	
Agreed to .....	11
Mr Bartolucci .....	11
<b>Safe Drinking Water Act, 2001, Bill 3, Ms Churley</b>	
Agreed to .....	11
Ms Churley .....	11
<b>Saving for Our Children's Future Act (Income Tax Amendment), 2001, Bill 4, Mr Hastings</b>	
Agreed to .....	12
Mr Hastings .....	12
<b>Audit Amendment Act, 2001, Bill 5, Mr Gerretsen</b>	
Agreed to .....	12
Mr Gerretsen .....	12
<b>Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2001, Bill 6, Mr Wood</b>	
Agreed to .....	12
Mr Wood .....	12
<b>Public Sector Salary Disclosure Amendment Act (Friends on the Take), 2001, Bill 7, Mr Bartolucci</b>	
Agreed to .....	12
Mr Bartolucci .....	13
<b>Canadian National Anthem Act, 2001, Bill 8, Mr Colle</b>	
Agreed to .....	13
Mr Colle .....	13

## MOTIONS

<b>House sittings</b>	
Mrs Ecker .....	13
Agreed to .....	14
<b>Private members' public business</b>	
Mrs Ecker .....	14
Agreed to .....	14
<b>Order of business</b>	
Mrs Ecker .....	14
Agreed to .....	14
<b>Holocaust Memorial Day</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	14
Agreed to .....	14
<b>Tributes to former members</b>	
Mrs Ecker .....	14
Agreed to .....	14

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Competitive electricity market</b>	
Mr Wilson .....	20
Mr Phillips .....	23
Mr Hampton .....	23
<b>Red Tape Commission</b>	
Mr Runciman .....	20
<b>Ontario youth entrepreneurship strategy</b>	
Mr Runciman .....	20
<b>Small business</b>	
Mr Tsubouchi .....	21
<b>Government services</b>	
Mr Sterling .....	21
Mr Sergio .....	23
<b>Government inspections</b>	
Mr Stockwell .....	22
<b>Construction industry</b>	
Mr Stockwell .....	22

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>School extracurricular activities</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	24
Mrs Ecker .....	25
<b>Health care reform</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	25, 28
Mr Clement .....	25, 28
<b>Competitive electricity market</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	26
Mr Wilson .....	26, 29
Mr Galt .....	28

## Education funding

Mr Hampton .....	27
Mrs Ecker .....	27, 28
Mr Marchese .....	28

## Hospital funding

Mr Parsons .....	29
Mr Clement .....	29

## Construction industry

Mr Stewart .....	30
Mr Stockwell .....	30

## Cancer treatment

Ms Lankin .....	30
Mr Clement .....	30

## Gridlock

Mr Smitherman .....	31
Mr Clark .....	31

## Electronic service delivery

Mr Beaubien .....	32
Mr Sterling .....	32

## Education labour dispute

Mrs Pupatello .....	32
Mrs Ecker .....	32

## Sex offender registry

Mr O'Toole .....	33
Mr Turnbull .....	33

## Doctor shortage

Ms Martel .....	33
Mr Clement .....	33

## PETITIONS

### Ontario Northland Transportation Commission

Mr Ramsay .....	34
-----------------	----

### Child care

Ms Martel .....	34
-----------------	----

### Sewage sludge

Mr O'Toole .....	34
------------------	----

### Water extraction

Mrs Dombrowsky .....	35
----------------------	----

### Protection of minors

Mr Wood .....	35, 36
Mr Gill .....	36
Mr O'Toole .....	37

### School facility

Mr Gravelle .....	35
-------------------	----

### Affordable housing

Mr Chudleigh .....	35
--------------------	----

### Services for the developmentally disabled

Ms Di Cocco .....	36
-------------------	----

### Northern health travel grant

Mr Bartolucci .....	36
---------------------	----

Continued overleaf



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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 23 April 2001

Lundi 23 avril 2001



Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 April 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 avril 2001

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### INTERIM SUPPLY

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments pending the voting of supply for the period commencing May 1, 2001, and ending October 31, 2001, such payments to be charged to the proper appropriation following the voting of supply.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mrs Ecker moves government notice of motion number 4. The Chair recognizes the government House leader and Minister of Education.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** My caucus colleague Mr Hardeman will be starting off the debate.

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I'm indeed pleased to be able to speak to this motion on interim supply.

This motion, as everyone in the House will know, is absolutely necessary so the people of Ontario can continue to receive the services provided by our government, which of course they all depend on.

Mr Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with my esteemed colleagues Mr O'Toole from Durham, Ms Molinari from Thornhill and Mr Galt from Northumberland. We're going to divide this time up fairly and equitably this evening.

I suppose I can't understand why anyone in this House would not support this motion. Only someone interested in obstructing the business of the province of Ontario and interfering with the everyday lives of all its people would consider opposing this motion. As such, I expect it will receive support from all sides of the House. I can assure you that this is a motion to pay the bills, and in rural Ontario we feel that once you have created the bills, it's appropriate to pay them, and that should not take a lot of debate.

As members are aware, this motion for interim supply provides the government with the authority to make payments to hospitals, nursing homes and other health care providers so that Ontarians can continue to get the quality health care they deserve; to the boards of education so that funding to our schools remains uninterrupted; to our municipal partners to help ensure that the people

of Ontario receive the quality local services they deserve; and to the people of Ontario through all the ministry programs the province provides that people depend on. Payments are currently being made under the authority of the interim supply motion this House passed last fall, and the term of that motion is nearly up.

As you know, the House rules of the Ontario Legislature limit the period covered by an interim supply motion to six months. The existing motion expires at the end of this month. Payments to all our funding partners and for government programs cannot be made after that date without this motion being passed. To ensure that all the payments scheduled on or after May 1, 2001, are made on time, it is necessary to provide the banking system and the mail system with some lead time. Lead time is especially important in outer areas of the province, particularly in northern and rural Ontario, to ensure there is no interruption of payments to the people and services provided in those areas. I'm sure all my colleagues in the Legislature from northern Ontario can appreciate that concern. As I represent the fine people of Oxford county, a riding with many rural areas, I'm anxious to ensure that no payments whatsoever are interrupted.

It's not good enough to leave enough time so that payments can be made just here in Toronto. All the people in the province are important. As such, the practice has been to provide at least five working days' lead time prior to the end of the month to ensure that payments are made everywhere. Thus, this motion must be passed tonight and without delay.

**1850**

I want to emphasize the importance of not interrupting payments to our funding partners and the people of Ontario. For example, scheduled payments in early May include payments to recipients of Ontario Works programs across the province, transfers to nursing homes to make sure our elderly are looked after and payments to the children's aid societies to help protect our children from harm.

There's no reason for delay on this motion. The people of Ontario deserve uninterrupted services. Some might consider delaying this motion in order to try to delay our government's bold new initiatives as laid out in Thursday's throne speech. Truly, I say, there's no reason to delay the implementation of this government's plan of action either. Thursday's throne speech laid out a bold action plan that includes reforms that people want in order to make life in the province better. The throne speech presented a package of 21 steps that will lead Ontarians into the 21st century. In it the government

outlined a plan that will protect jobs, keep families financially secure and help all Ontario communities grow even stronger.

I have spoken to people in my riding—business owners, families, public officials and farmers—and they've told me they want better, more accountable government and continued economic prosperity for their families and all Ontarians. For this reason it's important that we do not delay implementing the important changes they want and need. A good economy and good quality of life go hand in hand. A strong economy lets us support priorities such as health care and education, and offers families hope for a better future.

That's why removing the barriers to job growth and economic success remains a top priority for our government's 21 steps to the 21st century. Sustained growth is essential to protect the gains we've made and ensure prosperity into the future. Barriers to job investment and growth must continue to be removed. That's why I'm glad this government has the courage to continue with its tax cut pledges and will ensure that proposed new policies will not get in the way of Ontario's competitive edge.

The government's continued commitment to encourage economic and job growth is important to the people of my riding. The slowdown in the US economy has had effects on the people at home, whether it be layoffs at an auto plant in Ingersoll, an empty storefront in Tillsonburg or a farmer in southwest Oxford who is facing low commodity prices. Indicators of the slowing economy are visible. This is why a continuing agenda of tax cuts, efficient management of resources and encouraging economic growth is vital.

Approving today's motion for interim supply is partly about fiscal responsibility. The Ontario government must continue to meet its obligations to pay its bills and must be accountable for how those bills are paid. In the same vein, taxpayers expect all organizations and agencies to be accountable for how their money is spent. It is, after all, not the government's money that is being spent but in fact the hard-earned dollars of Ontario's taxpayers. They expect accountability for the use of that money.

I'm pleased that the throne speech included new accountability measures to ensure that all organizations receiving government money are spending it appropriately. As you are aware, the broader public sector institutions such as municipalities, hospitals and schools spend over 16% of Ontario's GDP—not 16% of tax dollars, but 16% of the entire gross domestic product of the province. That's a huge chunk of wealth earned in this province each year, but there's still little accounting to the taxpayers about how carefully those billions are spent each and every year.

The throne speech promises sweeping reforms that will ensure that all public sector institutions are accountable. Proposed amendments to the Audit Act will empower the Provincial Auditor to make sure taxpayer-funded institutions spend public money prudently, effectively and as intended. I think this is a great measure to help protect the money of our hard-working taxpayers.

As you are aware, much of the money this interim supply motion will allow the government to flow will be going to initiatives to help children and families. The government is committed to ensuring that children get the best possible start in life. That's why the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program was initiated. The well-being of our children is also the focus of Ontario's Promise, a public-private initiative aimed at providing our young people with the best start possible. This is a great initiative. It will bring all of the resources that our communities have to offer together to help our children.

Last Thursday the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Hilary Weston, graced us with her presence, reading the speech from the throne. I am doubly honoured that the Lieutenant Governor will be joining me at an Ontario's Promise community volunteer summit tomorrow in Woodstock. We will be recognizing the importance of so many hard-working volunteers in the riding of Oxford. Community service is a noble undertaking, and we are blessed that so many of Ontario's citizens share their talents to help others.

I'm extremely pleased that the throne speech included an important announcement to help our children as well. The government is going to establish a network of local early-years centres accessible to all children and families. I applaud this forward-thinking initiative.

The important interim supply motion will also allow the government to meet its health care funding commitments. This government is certainly committed to ensuring that every citizen has access to quality health care where and when they need it. I'm proud that health care spending will increase for the sixth consecutive year under this government.

Quality health care is truly important to the people of my riding. Last December I was pleased to join the Minister of Health in announcing a new hospital for the city of Woodstock. Just last Monday I was pleased to join Minister Clement at the rededication of the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital, which is celebrating 75 years of service. Later this week I will have the pleasure of recognizing the tremendous efforts of many volunteers in my riding involved in assisting our hospitals and health care service providers in their duties. Clearly, there was strong commitment to quality health care in Oxford county.

But massive year-over-year budget increases cannot be sustained indefinitely. This is why I am glad that the government is taking a lead in assembling patients, nurses, doctors and others to seek consensus on the best way to allocate the billions spent annually on health care.

The motion of interim supply before us is very important. It should not be delayed, because it allows the government to continue to operate and not interrupt any services that people depend on. It should also not be delayed because we should move forward quickly on the ambitious but attainable 21-step agenda to lead Ontario into the 21st century that was laid out in Thursday's throne speech.

The people of Ontario work hard, both at their individual occupations and in their communities. We owe



it to them, as government, to get on with the initiatives that will make all of their lives better.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to speak to this motion. At this point we'll turn it over to our esteemed member from Durham.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member from Lincoln on a point of order.

**Mr Peter Kormos:** Mr Speaker, it's my understanding that this is a rotation, notwithstanding—

**Mr Hardeman:** No, it's not.

**Mr Kormos:** Be careful, my friends. Notwithstanding that Tory backbenchers believe it's a solid block, my understanding is that this is a rotation, sir.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Niagara Centre, I'd like to apologize for not having your riding correct, but your point is well taken, that during debate, where time is allocated equally among the three caucuses, it does rotate in clockwise fashion. Anybody who is in rotation to speak will speak when it comes around again. In that respect, I would recognize the member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

1900

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** Mr Speaker, I'd just indicate that I, too, will be sharing my time, with the members for Windsor West, St Catharines and Scarborough-Rouge River.

I'm pleased to join in the debate on supply tonight, which is the motion to provide the funds for the government to pay its bills. Let me just say to the public of Ontario that the government says, "You've got to pass this thing tonight." The House just came back today. We've been off since the middle of December, and the people in Ontario should recognize Mike Harris has not had a sitting here since the middle of December. We have not been sitting since the middle of December, and the government calls us back today and says, "You've got to pay the bills today. If we don't pay the bills today, people aren't going to get their cheques."

I would say to the government that this is no way to run an organization. We're talking about a \$60-billion operation. Ontario deserves a government that knows how to run the operation. To call us back today and say, "We must have supply tonight. We'll have less than three hours' debate, and then we want you to sign the cheques, because otherwise people aren't going to get paid," is ridiculous.

We could have been sitting in January, in February, in March, but here we are, almost at the end of April, and finally they call us back. Mike's been down to Florida monthly, at least four times. Any one of those times we could have been back here dealing with it.

We'll do nothing that will stand in the way of our hard-working civil servants getting their paycheques, and the people in Ontario who deserve it. But I would just say to Ontarians that you couldn't have a more obvious example of the way Mike Harris tries to run this province, and dare I say—

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I let it go a couple of times. I think the member you're referring to has a riding, and I would prefer that you use either his riding or his title. I use that with you, and I expect you to use that with other members.

**Mr Phillips:** Premier Harris could have called this House back when we were scheduled to come back, but he didn't. I noticed in the speech from the throne the term "accountability." Premier Harris wants to hold everybody accountable except himself. For four months we haven't seen him around here, and I gather he will not be here in the Legislature at all this week.

In terms of accountability, we heard a request today: "Let's see the budget of the cancer organization." We can't see that. That's not accountable. I've been trying for 15 months now to find out the details of the 407 sale. No, no, we can't get that. When Premier Harris wants to attack school boards or teachers or hospitals, there has to be accountability. But when we want to hold him accountable, he's nowhere to be found.

So I just say to ourselves, and to the member for Oxford who led off the debate saying, "We must get this passed immediately, because otherwise the bills won't be paid," can you imagine any business in Ontario trying to run its operation like this, saying, "We've been off, we've been closed, we've been on holidays for four months. We're reopening today and we've got to pay our bills," and going to the bank and saying, "Give me the money"?

So I say to the people of Ontario—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I'm glad to see everybody out tonight, and I'd like you to stay with us. The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

**Mr Phillips:** I just say to the people of Ontario, recognize that we have not been here in the Legislature since the middle of December. The government chose to keep us out of here for four months. The House began sitting today at 1:30. Here we are tonight at five after seven, and the government says, "You've got two hours to approve this spending or else we're not going to be able to pay our bills." Well, we've been out of here for four months. Is that any way to run the province?

We had a discussion earlier today—it's just typical of the Harris approach to government, whether it be causing chaos in our health care system, in our education system, in the environment, in the municipalities, whatever. So I say to the people of Ontario, another example of the mismanagement of Premier Harris's government.

In terms of the economy, which is one of the reasons we should have been back some time ago—the new Minister of Finance was sworn in on a Thursday; on Friday he said, "The economy is going to grow at 3.1%, for sure." Three days later, he said, "Whoops, I've kind of got a new estimate. It's not going to grow at 3.1%. It's going to grow at 2.8%." That was three days later. Now we find, of course, that they're saying, "The economy is even worse than we thought."

The member for Oxford said, "Thank goodness for exports driving the Ontario economy." We've heard from the government for the last four years that it wasn't exports that have driven the Ontario economy; it's been their tax cuts. You won't find one single economist in Ontario who would say to you that it was. Every economist will say that exports have been the major, significant contributor to the growth in the Ontario economy.

So I say, and we've said this for some time, 10 years ago 85% of our exports went to the US; today it's 93%. We are the most export-oriented jurisdiction in the industrial world, according to the government, and that's fine. Exports are great. They have driven Ontario's economy. But they had nothing to do with the cut in personal income tax. They had everything to do with the base that was laid many years ago.

The government is proceeding with its tax cuts; I understand that. The government will be implementing corporate tax cuts, according to the government, that will mean corporate taxes in Ontario will be 25% lower than neighbouring US states. You may say, "Isn't that great? We'll be 25% lower than neighbouring US states." It goes on to say—this is from a government document, Doing Business in Ontario—that taxes will be 25% lower than in neighbouring US states. But how are we going to do the rest of our plan? It says here that in Ontario employers spend about \$2,500 less per employee on health care than they do in the United States. My question is, how are we going to fund our health care system if we want corporate taxes to be 25% lower than in the neighbouring US states?

The government went on to say in this document, "Ontario manufacturing wage rates are especially attractive. When adjusted for payroll taxes and benefits, wage rates in the neighbouring US states can run almost 60% higher than wage rates in Ontario.

"US manufacturers pay, on average, more than \$3,100 per employee" for the kind of health care coverage provided by our publicly supported system here in Ontario.

It goes on to say that a KPMG study—a major consulting organization—shows the cost of running a firm in Toronto is 26% to 48% cheaper than in Atlanta, Dallas, Chicago, Boston, Jersey City, San Francisco, Los Angeles or New York.

My point is, the government has announced it is proceeding with tax cuts that will mean corporate taxes 25% lower than neighbouring US states. In addition to that, employers will have a cost advantage of \$3,100 per employee for health care, because we fund it through public support, public taxes. We will have wage rates in the US that are 60% higher than they are here in Ontario, and we will have costs dramatically lower. I just say to all of us, in terms of tax policy, how are we going to be able to afford to sustain the quality of our health care system and the quality of our education system?

On the job front, we have a problem. There are 4,000 fewer jobs in Ontario today than there were in November. Ontario has lost 46,000 manufacturing jobs. We now have 46,000 fewer manufacturing jobs than we had when we came into the year 2001. It's another reason we have

urged the Legislature to get back to work. We have a significant economic slowdown. The government finally acknowledged it. The Minister of Finance, over a very short period of time, acknowledged the significant slowdown, and yet this Legislature has not sat since the middle of December.

#### 1910

I've been very interested in the Premier's comments about health care. I remember—it was a few months ago—the Premier said, "Health costs in the province of Ontario are going to go up at least 5% a year." He said you need a 5% increase just to sustain our health care system. That didn't include any improvements to the system, just to sustain it. You all remember that was the argument the Premier used with the federal government. He said, "Listen, we've done our studies. Health costs are going to go up a minimum of 5% every year for at least the next 10 years." I'm now hearing the Premier singing a bit of a different tune. I gather the Premier is now changing his tune to say, "Well, maybe I wasn't quite right on that increased cost. Maybe it won't be going up that much." The documents he produced said it's a minimum of that just to cover the cost of an aging population, with the demands on our system, at least 5% a year. He said to the Prime Minister, "That is the minimum. You have to understand that." Now I gather he's making some changes.

I've been interested in the Minister of Education's announcement of increased spending on health care. It's instructive to note that the government talks about cutting property taxes. The numbers the government gives us show the revenue going into education from property taxes is going up. It's not going down. These aren't my numbers; these are the government's own documents where they show on education that property tax revenue is going up.

Interestingly enough, I'm not sure many people in Ontario realize that the province of Ontario set almost \$6 billion of property taxes. Most businesses in Ontario don't realize that the majority of their business property taxes are set not by Hazel McCallion, Mel Lastman and the various mayors across the province, but are set by Premier Harris. He sets the majority. Over half of the property taxes on business are set by the province for education. We'd heard that the province is cutting property taxes for education. The number the government produced for us shows that in 2001, property tax revenue is actually up more than \$40 million. It's going up, not down.

When the minister says spending on education is going up, we now find that the province funds nothing on school capital. It is now all in the operating budgets of school boards. So when she announces her increased spending in education, it includes all the provision for capital.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** That's not accurate.

**Mr Phillips:** The minister says it's not accurate. I challenge you to prove I'm wrong, because I am using your own ministry documents. If I'm wrong, prove it.



I'm pleased to participate in the debate on supply. I found it ironic in the extreme that the government led off with this, "We must have this approved by 9 o'clock tonight." We haven't been around here for four months, but, "Oh, you've got to sign now." It sounds like an unusual door-to-door salesperson who says, "You've got to sign this deal." Surely if the government believed what it was saying, we would have been back here weeks ago. But here we are, four months off and now, "Sign a cheque. Sign it tonight. Sign in two hours or else the province is going to collapse."

I just say to the people of Ontario that as you watch this debate, you probably appreciate the challenges we face here. Premier Harris likes to say he's running this like a business. If any business person tried to run their business this way, they would be out of business. They wouldn't take four months off, show up and say, "I want a bank loan tonight."

First it was health care that Premier Harris got his hands on and messed up, cut hospital spending by 20% within the first few months of coming into office. Second it was education; we've never seen education in as much turmoil as it is today, without a question.

Then it was the environment, where the Premier cut a third of the staff, a huge part of the budget, and we have serious environmental problems. Then it's our municipalities, where the Premier ignored the advice of his own hand-picked Who Does What committee, rearranged the arrangements and dumped on to the municipalities another \$600 million of costs.

Today we heard that the famed open market is coming to hydroelectricity, but it will all be done behind closed doors with, believe me, hundreds of millions of dollars of profits being made by the investors but the Ontario consumer being left in the dark.

Today we have another example: "Sign the deal. We need supply within two hours or else the province grinds to a halt." Surely this is no way to run a province like Ontario.

**Mr Kormos:** First, let me apologize to Father Mulligan and his colleagues and friends down in Welland this evening who are celebrating his incredible years of service to Notre Dame high school, to the Catholic community, the community at large, to generations of young people. You see, the Father is being called to serve in Rome, and we're blessed, we're incredibly fortunate in Welland to have had as one of our colleagues, one of our spiritual leaders, one of our community leaders, a man like Father Mulligan, whose qualities and strengths are acknowledged not only locally but by the Vatican.

It's certainly our loss to see him move on. I'm going to look forward to having somebody I can not just call upon but perhaps prevail upon should I be in Rome over the course of the next several years. But I want to join, albeit from here at Queen's Park, the huge community of his friends and colleagues who thank him and congratulate him.

It's interesting. I wasn't sure I wanted to participate in this debate. In fact, you'll recall New Democrats earlier

today made it quite clear that they thought it was entirely inappropriate that this government, after stalling the return of Parliament for a month, after having simply fiddled away during the course of the three months prior to March 19 when the House calendar would have otherwise required this Parliament to resume, on its first day of actual sitting says, "Oh, we've got to sit in the evening. We've got stuff we've got to catch up, we've got stuff we've got to do and get done." Good grief, they would have had a whole month to do it if they had come back in compliance with the House calendar.

There are only two opposition parties, but I suspect I speak for every one of them when I say it's been a very frustrating four months. There's been stuff going on down there where I come from, in Welland and Thorold and Pelham and south St Catharines, stuff that very much warrants being raised here in this Parliament, but this Premier and this government and this Tory caucus have made very distinct and clear efforts to ensure that it isn't raised here, because they stalled the return of Parliament well beyond the House calendar return date.

We've endured a winter down in Niagara where senior citizens have faced 100% and 125% increases in their heating costs, people like Mrs Brkljacic up on Broadway Avenue. She hasn't received any increase in her pension. She hasn't enjoyed any of your tax cuts, because with her modest income at the age of—what—90 years now, you see, she doesn't see any tax cut. Mrs Brkljacic understands that the biggest single tax cuts go to the richest people in this province. Your tax cuts haven't helped her pay for the 125% increase in her natural gas heating costs this winter. What are you going to tell this mature senior citizen who has worked hard all of her life? To turn the heat down? She's already got it down as low as a 90-year-old should have to endure.

**1920**

We wanted this Legislature to be sitting so we could come here and talk to you and your Premier about the need for you and your government to get actively involved in the real issues affecting real people out there, in places like where I come from.

Child care: my colleague from Nickel Belt has been touring the province. I was proud to join her several months ago in Niagara Falls, where I think she kicked off this campaign. She went on to Kingston, Peterborough, Windsor, Sudbury and Ottawa and she's going to be in Thunder Bay. The member for Nickel Belt is going to be in Thunder Bay this Wednesday, joining with the Coalition for Better Child Care and CUPE as they fight to restore subsidized child care to those communities, just like she was down in Niagara meeting with mother after mother, family after family, parent after parent who can't access child care for their kids.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Tell them about Marney MacLean.

**Mr Kormos:** Let me tell you about Marney MacLean, a wonderful young woman, a strong woman, a good woman with two teenaged boys. Marney MacLean was working in a seniors' home as a cleaner, working for the

lowest of wages but working hard, working with pride, struggling with an income of less than \$300 a week, raising two teenaged sons alone; proud of the role she plays in taking care of our parents and grandparents in that senior citizens' home and proud—not wealthy, not one of your friends—of her commitment to her children, proud of her commitment to her workplace and her colleagues at work and to the senior citizens who are being taken care of there, proud of her community and proud of the things she and her parents and grandparents had built by working together, things like public education and publicly funded health care and, yes, things like subsidized child care so that women like Marney could go to work, notwithstanding those low wages.

She didn't need child care all day. You see, her kids are both school-aged kids. She needed just a little bit in the morning, because she starts work awful early, and she needed a little bit after school so that she could pick them up and so that she would know they were safe and in a safe place; that little bit of time before school started and that little bit of time after school ended. Marney's arrangements with her mother, the boys' grandmother, had to end because grandma just couldn't do it any more. Grandma tried, grandma wanted to, but she couldn't do it any more.

Marney looked for licensed child care but it wasn't just a matter of a lineup out the door or a lineup around the block; it was a lineup right to the end of city limits. We learned there are 500 to 600 families, 1,200 or maybe 1,800 kids, who are being denied child care down in Niagara region alone. Marney was put into the incredible predicament that if she didn't work and was on social assistance—your workfare—she'd get child care. But if she does work, taking home somewhat less than 300 bucks a week, she can't get child care. At the end of the day, though, she's still concerned about the safety of her kids and wants to ensure that they're cared for in a safe place, in a place that she can trust and the kids can trust for that brief period of time when she leaves for work and until they go to school, and after school until she can pick them up on her way home from a long shift of hard work at a senior citizens' home, where she's scrubbing floors and cleaning toilets and doing laundry and all those other sorts of things that cleaning people do in places like that.

Marney was caught between putting her kids at risk and not working. As a result of your failure, this government's failure, to address the incredible shortages in subsidized child care that you've created, Marney has been forced to abandon that job. Of course she can't get workfare because she quit her job, according to workfare. That's called a Catch-22, isn't it? I think that's what it's been called. Catch-22: a wonderful dilemma you've created for Marney and other women like her.

We've been waiting for the chance to come back here and talk to you about people like Marney MacLean and the 600 families—1,200 to 1,800 kids in Niagara—who are being put in the same position as Marney's kids. So don't think we weren't eager to be back here, never mind March 19 but, as has been said, February 19. We would have been back January 19 if you had let us.

Fuel costs for seniors, heating costs, property taxes—I don't have to tell you, do I, Speaker, that the province of Ontario does not begin and end at the intersection of Yonge and Bloor. The bulk of Ontario is not Toronto; the bulk of Ontario is more like Welland, Thorold, Pelham or St Catharines and communities like that than it is about Toronto—city councils like Welland's and Thorold's and Pelham's and, I dare say, St Catharines's because of the incredible downloading, the new costs you've imposed upon those small communities that have already cut to the bone. Don't you offend them or their citizenry by daring to talk about challenging them to find yet more efficiencies. They've already cut to the bone. They've already trimmed the fat. They did it long before you came along, and what you're doing is imposing property tax increases. Those are flat taxes. Those are the ones that have no regard for a person's income, aren't they? That means that the senior citizen living on \$9,000 and \$10,000 a year or less pays the same increase. Think about it, friends: accountability. That means senior citizens, the 80-, 85-, 90-year-old women or men—more likely women, statistically—living on \$8,500, \$9,000, \$9,500 a year: yes, my friends, that's the real Ontario.

The minimum wage here at Queen's Park is \$78,000 a year. You are the people who wanted a 42% salary increase for yourselves. You thought you had it in the bag. You thought the fix was in. You thought you were going to just rush it through like a greased pig and that nobody'd notice. When the opposition said no to your 42% increase, you said, "We'll settle for a 34% increase," and then you settled for a 20-something per cent salary increase. If it weren't for the opposition and New Democrats standing here saying, "No way, pal"—don't you dare raid the kitty when you're beating up on single mothers and on senior citizens and on hard-working people, those same hard-working people who have been working for the same minimum wage of \$6.85 an hour, those same hard-working people who haven't seen a penny increase in their salaries, by virtue of minimum wage, in the six years that the Conservatives have been in power here in the province while your rich, wealthy friends, the Frank Stronachs of Ontario, the \$42-million-a-year salary makers, have seen tax cuts that would choke a horse.

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** He's a Liberal.

**Mr Kormos:** Oh, he's your friend, my friend: John Roth, Frank Stronach, all the big money people. They're the ones you gave the big tax cuts to. You didn't give the tax cuts to the hard-working folks from Niagara Centre. You didn't give the tax cuts to senior citizens who are struggling with huge increases in property taxes, a huge increase in heating costs and what will soon be dramatic spikes in the cost of electricity to light their homes and run the motors that force that hot air through their furnaces. How much more punishment are you going to impose on these people? How more bloodied and beaten up do you want them to be? How do you expect them to retain any sense of dignity, never mind confidence in this



government? The folks of those communities lost confidence in this government a long, long time ago. Most of them never had confidence in this government, for good reason.

**1930**

You will recall that earlier today the New Democrats weren't going to collaborate with the Conservatives, weren't going to play their game of, "Oh, we tried to hide from the Legislature." Yes, the Conservatives tried to hide from the Legislature for four months now. They should have come back March 19, but they broke the House rules. The House calendar said, "Come back March 19." The Tories said, "No, we're not going to." They said, "No, we'll dither out here," because you guys were afraid of the issues that you're being confronted with now. Then you've got the audacity to say, "But you've got to help us. The opposition parties have to help us by supporting this motion to have evening sittings." New Democrats aren't prepared to help you in your flight from question period, and quite frankly New Democrats are going to oppose and resist any effort you make to avoid question period, which includes your evening sittings, because we know what your evening sittings are. Your evening sittings are being here without the scrutiny of the press. Your evening sittings are going to be to ram through legislation without the public having access—oh, they could be here if they wanted, but they're not inclined to, and you know that, because of the realities of their lives—without having the opportunity to scrutinize you here in this chamber at Queen's Park. Your evening sittings are all about creating artificial days so you can accelerate the pace of legislation, so that the press gallery hasn't got an opportunity to report and so that, more importantly, especially as you join that with your time allocation, the opposition members don't have an opportunity to debate it.

New Democrats voted against your evening sittings today and New Democrats are going to vote against every effort you make to run and hide from question period, because you got exposed today in question period on your agenda of the deregulation and privatization of electricity and on the huge new costs that's going to create for homeowners, small business and industry across this province. You got exposed today by Howard Hampton and question period will be the forum wherein that occurs day after day. You're going to run from question period, you're going to hide from it, but we're not going to support you in that effort because we've going to vote against every single motion that you put forward that will allow you to have a legislative day without a question period. We believe in accountability. You may not be prepared to expose yourselves to accountability, but New Democrats are going to make sure you're held accountable.

I feel compelled to yield so that the member for Nickel Belt can address you on, among other things, yet one of the other issues that you people had just been, oh, not interested in. That's the doctor shortage down in the Niagara region, and not just in Niagara but in small

communities across southern Ontario, because the doctor shortage which has plagued the north throughout your six years has now infected the south.

Again, I've got senior citizen after senior citizen, I've got old-timer after old-timer—these are good folks, friends. These are people who have worked hard all of their lives. These are people who have paid taxes, and paid them knowing that they were making an investment in their community, in their province and in their country, and you're selling off that investment on them. You're selling it off on them.

These senior citizens are coming into my constituency office; and, by God, instead of standing up and reading your canned scripted speeches, I wish some of you would start talking candidly about the people who are coming into your constituency offices too. I know they're coming into your constituency offices, because they're calling mine after they're there, just like I suspect they're calling my colleague Jim Bradley in St Catharines, just like they're calling the member for Nickel Belt.

After they've been to your offices and get the fluff and the hokey, they call our offices and say, "What is going on? Either my Tory member won't see me because he knows I'm going to talk about something that ideologically he's opposed to"—something as fundamental as the interests of the poorest people in our society, something as fundamental as the right of working people to organize, something as fundamental as the right of a mother to know that her kids are being safely taken care of while she's at work or while she's at school or while she's at upgrading and retraining.

They're calling our offices, because they're getting told, "Oh, go to another level of government," when they go to your offices to talk about the dramatic increases in their heating costs. They're calling our offices when they get the brush-off from you guys about doctor shortages. They're calling our offices after you apologize for a Family Responsibility Office, a family support system, that now, after five years—what was that, November 1996?

**Ms Martel:** Yes.

**Mr Kormos:** November 1996? The member from Nickel Belt tells me November 1996.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** We'll get to that. Now, then, five years later, it remains in the same chaos, the same disarray, the same disorganized state that it was in when the member for Nickel Belt broke into, as it was said by the then Attorney General—

**Ms Martel:** And assaulted the security guard.

**Mr Kormos:** —and assaulted the security guard, as it was said by the then Attorney General—

**Ms Martel:** And trespassed.

**Mr Kormos:** —and trespassed and filmed the whole exercise and exposed the lack of candour that the Attorney General had been displaying on a daily basis in the House.

Remember what was happening, Speaker? Remember, the Attorney General was being asked daily, "What's

going on at your family support plan office? What's going on? We're getting these complaints."

The Attorney General said, "No problem; everything's moving along there. It's just working like nothing ever could before in your life." We heard that day after day after day, until finally the member for Nickel Belt took matters into her own hands, brought along some of her friends and came back with a video tape that exposed the emperor—

**Ms Martel:** With no clothes.

**Mr Kormos:** Not only with no clothes—buck-naked out on Yonge Street or Keele Street or wherever the heck it was, up in North York somewhere. You still haven't fixed it. The Attorney General of the day couldn't fix it, his successor couldn't fix it, and so what has the Ministry of the Attorney General done? They've done what you do to a dud car. You know the Hyundai you bought that ended up being a rustbucket, a dog? You unload it. You put a quick paint job on it and unload it.

So the Attorney General, effectively acknowledging that they're incapable of fixing the Family Responsibility Office, they're incapable of putting the family support plan back into running order as it was before they dismantled the nine regional offices, peddles it off to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Ms Martel:** He's going to put it on Andersen Consulting computers.

**Mr Kormos:** He's going to unload it on to Andersen Consulting, because they're going to end up making profits—American-based, corporate Andersen Consulting, profiteers on the backs of the poorest people in this province, good friends, not just in the back pocket, not just in bed with this government, but literally inhaling the carbon dioxide over the pillow with this government.

Andersen Consulting? This was all about setting up the Family Responsibility Office for total privatization so that, oh, yes, the Minister of Correctional Services' corporate, American, for-profit friends can make even more profit off the backs of the taxpayers of this province—the taxpayers who, because of your tax cuts for the wealthiest, are increasingly the poorest and lowest-income people in Ontario; the people without the tax cuts, the people like the folks in Welland who are at risk of losing their homes, notwithstanding that they're paid for, because their property taxes are being increased by this Conservative government, because they're being downloaded on to, because their heating bills are increasing, because this Conservative government wants to have nothing to do with them but merely wants to pass the buck.

So you won't see New Democrats collaborating with the Tories when it comes time—

**Ms Martel:** Or the Liberals.

1940

**Mr Kormos:** I won't speak for the Liberal caucus. If they choose to vote with the Conservatives when it comes to evening sittings, God bless. Far be it for me to try to impact their policies.

But you'll not see New Democrats cozying up to the Tories in the Tories' effort to avoid question period. You'll see New Democrats doing everything they've got to, everything they can do, and we will do it to make sure you have as much question period exposure as you could ever get.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the chief government whip on a point of order.

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** I'm sure all members of the House would want to congratulate the member from Welland on his recent appointment as the House leader for the NDP. We look forward to his reasoned and calm influence in this House.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's really a pleasure but it's also a challenge, I might say, to rise this evening and speak on the interim supply motion. The challenge part is to follow the member for Niagara Centre, who is always entertaining and usually only entertaining. Really, the substance is completely off the mark and I think most viewers realize that. It's typified by one of his more recent actions with the member for Nickel Belt, breaking into the family responsibility office and making fun of those people who were doing their job. That's their attitude, and it needs to be dealt with in a more formal way.

The current motion for interim supply expires, as has been said, at the end of the month. A new motion must be in place. It's more or less a routine thing, I'd call it. A smart government would look at how we deal with these kinds of orders because, as the viewers tonight will see, much of what we talk about has very little to do with the substance of interim supply, which, by the way, is the authority by schedule that would include payments to nurses, nursing homes, hospitals, doctors, municipalities, general welfare recipients, children's aid and supply accounts. They simply can't be paid without this being passed. So it's more or less a formality. I don't believe any member on either side of the House would be voting against this. If they did, it would only be a practical manoeuvre in a political sense, and even there, none of us here wants to make sure those people don't get paid—I think everyone here.

There have been some suggestions made earlier by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. He spent a fair amount of time, as he should do as the finance critic, talking about the whole issue of how strong the Ontario economy was. He was criticizing that much of that strength was based on the export strength. If you really want to follow the debate on the anti-government approach about why our economy is based on exports, the reality is that we're living next door to the largest trading country in the world, and it's important, unlike our Prime Minister, who is always bad-mouthing the President and others, to have good relationships with our trading partners. Of course, there is a relationship between the strength of their economy and the strength of our economy.

But I think if you probed what Mr Phillips was saying earlier—and I do respect his insights in these matters.



Quite often they're wrong, but I still respect his insights. What I mean by that is that if our major trading partners are indeed export, it raises the question of accountability. It also raises the question of whether we're competitive. We must be competitive with our trading partners. So I pose two questions to him: if he thinks we should be less dependent on trade, then that means we will have no trade. If we're going to be dependent on trade, should we not harmonize our taxes and competitive standards with our trading partners? That's a larger debate.

But I'm very interested in the finance debate in a general sense, because I had the privilege to be appointed by the Premier to be the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, and it really is a very informative and educational experience.

It leads to another point I want to establish tonight in the very few minutes that have been allocated to me. Over the period of January up until as recently as this past week, I have been meeting, not just in my riding of Durham but as part of the finance committee—and I can say it's an all-party process. We travelled and had 10 days of public hearings and pre-budget hearings and those inputs were basically given to the Minister of Finance. But there were three other subsequent tiers of meetings as input to the budget with stakeholders. I believe it was extremely important for them to have the opportunity to speak directly to the minister of the specific ministry, whether it's colleges and universities or whether it's with the Ministry of Health. All of those people had the opportunity to speak directly with the minister they're responsible for as well as the Minister of Finance to see how it all plays out in the budget.

To be there, I guess to some extent as an observer, has been the most educational experience to this part of my time here at Queen's Park. Very, very informative, and I certainly enjoyed it and I'm very appreciative of the opportunity.

But furthermore, the minister has asked me to lead the consultations, which I might say is a very important opportunity for just regular people, normal people, and that consultation is the merger of the Ontario Securities Commission and the Financial Services Commission. As part of that I want to make sure that the viewer today is well aware that there is a discussion paper available out there establishing a single financial services regulator. This consultation paper was just released a couple of weeks ago and I should say that those viewing tonight may want to get a copy of this. You could contact your local MPP. You could also log on to [www.gov.on.ca/fin](http://www.gov.on.ca/fin). The preamble to this discussion paper is the most readable part—it's about 10 or 12 pages if you intend to download it. It really gives you the broader context of the intent of these discussions. In fact, I might add that in my history and my research on this debate on streamlining and harmonizing the one-window approach to investment, whether it's insurance—life insurance, auto insurance—whether it's pension inquiries, securities or equities issues, the person that's looking at those decisions of what to do with RRSPs wants a simplified

process where there's strong consumer protection, but at the same time they don't want to have to walk through a very complex maze.

I think—in my limited research on this—these discussions have really been going on for about the last 10 years. I know that Floyd Laughren, when he was the Finance Minister—heaven forbid—had most of the discussions for the merger of the Ontario Securities Commission, which is self-regulating today. Many of those lead-up discussions to that merger were done under the leadership or lack of leadership by the NDP when they were the government.

Moving forward, David Young—now the Attorney General—who was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance of the day, Minister Eves—did extensive consultation with the stakeholders in the FSCO, which is the Financial Services Commission of Ontario. So we have two organizations: the Ontario Securities Commission, which really looks after the equities and the prospectuses part of the business, and then on the other side we have the Financial Services Commission, which looks after everything from insurance to pensions, credit unions and a lot of financial institutions other than banks, because as you know banks come under the federal government and they've been talking about merging there.

But in all of this, the most important thing in my view is to make sure we have consumer protection. As I'm meeting with individuals and groups, I encourage viewers here tonight—my name obviously is on the screen the odd time—to contact me or the ministry. They can get a copy of the report. They can download it.

#### 1950

The input is due by June 29. The draft legislation is part two of this large 220-and-some-page book, and the larger part of it is the actual draft legislation. The draft legislation has a great deal of separation from the actual rules and regulations part of it, but I can assure you that one of the most important oversights is that the Minister of Finance and cabinet have the final say, because as elected people we are responsible and accountable to you, the people, and in this case I'm referring specifically to the person looking at financial issues, whether it's life insurance or auto insurance. They are complex issues which we want to hear feedback on.

In my role as parliamentary assistant, that's what I do in Toronto, and it's a real privilege, but I can assure you, like many members, over the past four or five months I've met with the hospital boards. I've visited physically most of the hospitals in my riding. I've visited the four school boards in my riding. I have met with them. I have also met with the Minister of Education, Janet Ecker, and our boards of education in the area.

Actually, I've been to several schools. It is a treat for me as my wife is a teacher and my middle daughter is a high school teacher. It's a real privilege to be in schools. I just wish we could look over the gorge, if you will, or over the valley and see into the future, that the world of education and what our children need to know is

certainly changing. Sometimes when I listen to the opposition, I think it's *déjà vu*. They want to roll the clock back to the good old days that Earl Manners keeps referring to.

I think there are new, innovative, distributive learning opportunities for our children in the future. We need to have the best teachers in the world. We need to make sure that our children are getting the best, highest-quality education in the world. Whether it's the best teachers or whether it's charters or vouchers, all these things have been brought up for the last decade or so.

I think David Cooke had it right when he started education reform, the Royal Commission on Learning. The *For the Love of Learning* document has 167 recommendations. Respectfully, they had a royal commission because everyone admitted the system was in serious trouble. I wouldn't blame my five children who are in the system. I wouldn't blame my wife and sisters and family members who are teachers. I think the system generally lacks any sense of accountability to the student.

I don't think it's any more aptly demonstrated than in Toronto. I had a person call me today who said, "Why don't they have all these strikes in the summer or on the Christmas break or the March break? Why don't they have the strikes when the students aren't being held hostage?" I think it's a fair question that should be asked. I personally think they should have the contracts expire at the end of June so that they have from June to September to iron out all these workplace issues.

I think very good teachers should be very well paid. In fact, I would say they should be paid over the grid. I wouldn't necessarily equate a PhD to being a good teacher. I think many good teachers first love children, have experience and bring energy beyond the core teaching time, to before and after and into their community. I think they should be rewarded for that. I think paying them on a union schedule—years of education and years of teaching—is rather rigid. It doesn't allow for respect for individual contribution. I think personally—I'm speaking on my own here—we should look at some of those innovative ways of rewarding excellence.

By the same token, to think that every child today learns by rote, like we did in my generation, where we sat very obediently with 30 or 35 kids in a class, all learning levels, physics, chemistry, all that stuff.

I would say the respect that's in the school system is absolutely critical, to use a term that our Solicitor General uses occasionally. It's absolutely critical that there's respect for all of the players—certainly those with the school board, the trustees, the teachers, students and parents. It's more important than anything else.

Minister Coburn, the Minister of Agriculture, will be in my riding tomorrow night. He'll be meeting with the farm leadership group in the region of Duham. I have a great deal of respect for many of those people. On many occasions I have mentioned most of their names in Hansard from time to time. What I'm really trying to get at here is, he's been available to me, as his predecessor Mr Hardeman was, to try to work through and to get

input directly from the people on the front line. I believe they are trying to do the right thing, not just with the grains and oilseeds. I believe that Mr Coburn and Mr Hardeman, his predecessor, made a firm commitment to demonstrate that the federal government, it's my understanding, still hasn't delivered the cheques, which is a shame because they're buying the seeds that go into the land, that grow the corn and wheat for the bread we eat. I think that by contributing over the 60-40 split was a good signal. I'd like to see that we look after the horticultural group and the Ontario fruit and vegetable growers as well because the apple producers in my riding have been saying they need support.

As I'm wrapping up here—I know I have very little time left. Tonight, I had a scheduling difficulty. Tonight, I was having a meeting with the Protect the Ridges group. This is very important. It kind of overlaps natural resources, municipal affairs and agriculture. It crosses many ministries because it affects the Oak Ridges moraine, which is at the very top part—a beautiful area of my riding. This Protect the Ridges group was basically formed by grassroots citizens who really care about the environment. I'm not even in any political sense trying to make any hay out of that, out of respect for working with them. The leaders in that group would be Debbie Vice; there'd be Kevin Campbell, who is a younger man—and it's quite tragic that his wife just passed away a couple of weeks ago rather suddenly—who's been very active; Martin Feaver, another gentleman; and Bernie London. These are four people I've had direct contact with.

But tonight there would be 200 or 300 people at a meeting in Enfield and I'm not able to be there. I have been in contact with probably those four people and others, and I've asked one of the people I work with to go down to show respect, to summarize what actions we're taking. But we also have a very important commitment to work with that group.

The concerns of the Protect the Ridges group are issues related really to the environment. There are things occurring there which—actually, this isn't even political. It sort of started under the previous NDP government. In fact, it started under the Liberals. This is paper sludge being spread on agricultural land and the need to have a certificate of approval.

I just want to bring some conclusion to that part. There were three fundamental commitments, I believe, in the throne speech to bring this back together. I think the best way to look at this time in this particular government's mandate is, it is pro-growth. We have to look forward to the future. If we're going to be distracted by the immediate economics, planning should involve a longer view. We heard that from many economists, and I believe Minister Flaherty is doing precisely that.

We have to look at fiscal responsibility. The reality of today is that the revenue may or may not be increased or decreased because of some export problems or confidence in the economy, but the fundamental thing here is that there is still growth. At the end of the day, Mr Phillips is going to argue that the growth is 3.5%. We're



coming off unprecedented growth in excess of 5% of GDP growth. We're down now to between 2% and 3%. Many of the world's economists, Don Drummond and many others have stated very clearly that we have a much more sophisticated economy with high technology, not just the auto sector, agriculture and a very diversified economy, that we in Ontario should be far better positioned, unlike the time when the NDP recession was exacerbated here in Ontario by absolutely incapable policy-making and incapable leadership, other than Bob Rae, whom I had a lot of time for. But he was surrounded by a band of merry men and women, actually.

**2000**

I think that accountability, the third piece of this, is extremely important. Accountability for the Liberals may mean the leader being here, but I can assure you that there's a very strong team. Accountability is to the taxpayers, and I think it starts with doing what you say and standing up for it. But you know, the fundamental difference, and I even see this in many of the speeches, the most important part—

*Interjections.*

**Mr O'Toole:** I'd like a bit of silence here for a moment; this is very important. The difference between the government and the opposition—I've thought long and hard about this—is leadership with a vision and the determination to deliver. I have yet to hear a consistent, coherent—

*Interjections.*

**Mr O'Toole:** I'm actually waiting—the member for St Catharines may want to listen—I think that Greg Sorbara, if he does arrive here, will put you into another tailspin. And I use the “if.” The reason I say that is there'll be another leadership race on the other side. I can see Gerard Kennedy, Joe Cordiano, Sandra Pupatello. Now the problem is, they all admit, and they're barracking, that they have a deficit in leadership and a deficit in vision. They're wandering around in the desert with a complete void of ideas. I feel badly for them. They're lacking any vision. They really don't get the essence of the throne speech.

With that, I have to relinquish some of my time. I have more to say, and perhaps with unanimous consent there'll be time at the end.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** I'm very pleased to speak to the interim supply bill tonight, because it's important for my community. While our colleagues across the way want to talk about rhetoric, and frankly you can just read it on their Web page, we want to deliver a very specific message about what kinds of things we expect in our community.

When we want to go back to the olden days, the olden days for us in Windsor, those are the days you could find a doctor. Those are the days you could go to a family doctor on a regular basis without waiting weeks and weeks just for an appointment. Those were the days when you could have a specialist appointment and actually get into the specialist within the same calendar

year. I do want to go back to those days in my community.

So what I'm saying to you now is, we have already advanced solutions that this government can undertake. In the throne speech we were very disappointed to see more rhetoric, not solution-driven in the area of health care. When we look at my community office in Windsor and what people call about, whether it's needing a family doctor, needing to see a specialist, the kind of health care that people are receiving, they're not happy with it, mostly because of a shortage of doctors, either a shortage of specialists, the wait times, the wait times to have diagnostic equipment for them. These are all areas that point to the need for innovative solutions.

What we hear instead is a discussion that advances the notion of two-tier medicine. So, depending on where you live and depending on your bank account will determine the quality of care that you're going to receive in this province. To that the Liberals do have a vision, and that vision screams “no” to two-tier health care.

Let me tell you that we've already met in advance, repeatedly, with every new Minister of Health that you choose to bring through the revolving door of the health ministry. We have said back in 1997, when we brought forward the application for an underserved designation for my own community, it was the first urban, southern city to have such a designation. Now if you were to colour the map of Ontario, most of Ontario would be underserved. This government just recognizes now that in fact we have a supply problem.

We've known about a supply problem for years, but the government is now finally acknowledging it. We need a long-term solution that we believe will be found in the George report, which we are expecting to be released and we expect it to say, “Expand medical schools,” and in particular a satellite unit in my own community affiliated with Western university as a satellite medical centre in Windsor as a long-term solution.

In the meantime we have advanced the notion of a nine-point plan of what this government can do today to relieve the problems that the people of Windsor are dealing with because of a lack of physicians. What we need you to do, because most of the category of “underserved” is just considered underserved, is designate categories so that you could clearly see where your crises are in Ontario because of a lack of physicians. You would red-flag some areas, of which my community would be one.

Having said that, it also allows the Ministry of Health to designate special protocols for our area to get moving on the kind of care our people need. We're asking for a special protocol to access out-of-country OHIP for certain procedures, for family doctors and specialist care. We need to get rid of the wait-lists. We don't have the supply of physicians to deal with them.

We're asking you to create a special incentive for the doctors who do have to deal with patients who are not their own so that these individuals who are in the workers' comp claim, who are in a workfare claim, who

can't even finish their file because they don't have a family doctor to sign the application forms—and these files go in the file of “closed, not sufficient information,” not because these individuals aren't trying to access the system and get to where they need to be but because they have no family doctor to actually complete their application process. It's unheard of. We need some level of incentive for doctors to take care of these people.

We're asking for a review of the method of billing for clinics. We've had a couple of new doctors come into our community, far less than we lose in attrition. However, those who have come in have quickly moved into the clinic system because there is no incentive in the OHIP billing practice that encourages doctors to go into family practice. This needs to change.

I am asking this government to immediately institute a SWAT team to consider that we are in crisis mode for a lack of physicians. By designating this as a crisis measure, we want a SWAT team that will operate almost like an amnesty treaty for a brief amount of time or a window of time that will allow the 450 foreign-trained doctors who we know are currently here to immediately enter the field and practise medicine. The ministry itself acknowledges at least 450 who are trained—trained in the US. We have people who are physicians who work in Detroit, who live in Windsor, who were trained in the US, who clearly would go through our guidelines with no issue. For this brief window of time in this amnesty period, we are asking you to remove the process you would ordinarily go through to allow these hundreds, who are just waiting and champing at the bit, to practise here.

We are asking you to review the funding of community health centres because, at a minimum, those few that we have in my community are taking some of the burden off and allowing people to go somewhere, but unfortunately the waits are long in those places as well.

We're asking you to do a review of the group practices which make an application to this government and are refused. This kind of funding for a group practice, a collection of doctors prepared to work together, would allow overhead expenses to be covered by some institutional branch of the Ministry of Health and allow them to bring in helpmates, allow them to hire nurse practitioners and dietitians, and get the breadth of service that people deserve when they see a family doctor.

We have a current caseload in our cardiac unit at Hotel-Dieu Grace that is untenable, where people who are waiting for angioplasty out of the London centre, which is our centre for Windsor patients, are waiting triple the length of time to get into the London facility. Our coordinator for the cardiac care program is desperately trying to get these patients in any cardiac centre across Ontario, and none is available to us. Now they are sitting in a \$1,000-a-day bed, waiting and waiting, triple the length of time required. I am asking this ministry to immediately approve doing angioplasty right here in my community of Windsor at Hotel-Dieu Grace. We have

the specialists who can do the procedure, we have all of the equipment necessary, and the patients are waiting.

Why is this related to physician shortage? We don't have enough cardiologists across the board in Ontario to take care of our patients in a timely fashion. I am asking you to move the procedure to my town so that we can get through that list quickly. We already know that the statistics surely say that our own patients die sooner in my community because of a lack of care in a timely fashion for our heart patients. This is not something that can be acceptable to any one of us, not just the member who represents the region.

I am also asking this group to approve an OHIP out-of-country process for these cardiac patients. We've got to get through that backlog. We are sitting with 20 people waiting in their homes because we don't have room in the cardiac care unit in Windsor, who are all waiting to be shuffled through the London unit. But all of the cardiac units across Ontario are jammed. You need to clear the log-jam.

As for us, we have at least the availability of moving to Detroit at an average of US\$20,000 for the angioplasty procedure. In US funds you have already spent more than that by having our patients sit in \$1,000-a-day beds in our cardiac care unit at Hotel-Dieu Grace. It makes financial sense to move this backlog. You will actually save money.

**2010**

Finally, I'm asking this government to consider special locums like they do in the north, where they move specialists through communities on a regular basis. They do a tour where they might appear in that community twice a month or once a month, where they can fit into an already established clinic to do service on a regular basis. If the program exists in the north, then, just as we've managed to get an underserved designation through a program that initially was just for the north, we too can do that for a locum program. The cost of bringing a hep C specialist doctor back to my community, where our hep C patients have no local doctor to follow them now, if we could find a doctor with that specialty who would be prepared to come to my community on a regular basis, at a minimum, in the interim, we could find some kind of solution for our patients.

Those are the nine points we've advanced on a repeated basis to this government. These are the nine points I'm asking the government to seriously consider as an interim solution because our patients cannot afford to wait.

**Ms Martel:** It's a pleasure for me to participate in this debate this evening, although I will follow up and reinforce what my colleague from Niagara Centre said earlier, which is, “I don't know why we're having this debate this evening.”

Here we are at least a month after this Ontario Legislature was due to resume, which was about the 19th, and the government has gotten into a big panic today and demanded that we sit because they just had to pass interim supply. I say to the government, if you just had to



pass interim supply, maybe you should have brought the House back a month ago, like we were regularly supposed to be coming back, so we could have dealt with supply and all of those other important matters that this government has not been dealing with. I think it has more to do with the government wanting to avoid question period, like the one we had today and the ones I hope we're going to continue to have, where we talk about hydro deregulation and how the consumers in this province are going to get it socked to them under that plan etc.

That is what this is all about. We're back a month later so the government could avoid a month of question period, and in a huge panic we've got to sit tonight because the government couldn't get something done that should have been done at least a month ago, had we been here.

Having said that, there were lots of things I wanted to speak about tonight but my colleague from Niagara Centre got a little carried away and so hasn't left me with a whole lot of time this evening. I particularly thought I would talk about the Ministry of Community and Social Services and perhaps patronage political appointments of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. One particular appointment that the government oh so desperately wanted to make was in Parry Sound-Muskoka, where the government tried to foist on a local hiring committee one Ms Pat Tennant, who I'm sure is amply qualified to work in a constituency office but who was not at all qualified to work as a community co-ordinator for the early years project. She was not qualified even by the list of qualifications the government itself gave those local hiring committees in order to hire those local people.

Specifically in her case, she had neither the educational experience nor the experience in a related social service field to be appointed. In fact, had the committee not been directed to do so, she would not have got even an interview for this position in the first place, because she was not qualified. Unfortunately, Ms Tennant's lost her employment in Mr Eves's office when he retired from politics, and the local committee was told to interview her, and then they were told to highly recommend her, and then, when they wouldn't do that, they were told to at least recommend her, which would have allowed the government to hire her. To their credit, that local committee refused to do that and gave to the government the name of the very highly qualified individual who had been selected through an important interview process last fall, whose name I gather the minister still has not confirmed, nor has he confirmed, as I understand it, all the names of the other community co-ordinators, 37 across the province, who were supposed to be appointed last fall.

The minister, just before I leave this topic, said it only happened in that community, but I know in my own community, where they have a very talented, qualified candidate whom I've had the pleasure of meeting, even that local selection committee got a phone call from the

children's secretariat in January advising that they had to interview a candidate of choice from the children's secretariat—ie, a candidate of choice for the Conservative Party. In the Sudbury case, the local committee was not told to highly recommend this candidate or indeed to recommend this candidate. They were told they had to have an interview, which they did.

The person who is qualified, highly qualified, who has been waiting to hear about this employment since last November, is still waiting, and we hope the minister will very soon appoint those 37 community coordinators so this early years project can finally get off the ground.

But I digress, because what I want to talk about this evening is the really serious doctor shortage we are facing in our part of the province. I want to begin by referencing the government's own statistics for the underserved area program which were released only about two weeks ago. The government's own statistics in northern Ontario show that some 35 communities in the north now need 120 family physicians and 167 specialists. That is 17 more family doctors and 45 more specialists than we needed in December 2000. That's a 27% increase in the last three months in terms of our needs.

Compare that to a year ago, December 1999, when the underserved area program pointed out that the north needed about 114 specialists at that time. So we now had, from one December to the next, 1999 to 2000, an increase in needs of another 53. That has increased again in the most recent statistics that have been released.

Seniors, students, families right across my riding—I suspect, right across your riding, Speaker—cannot find a family doctor. They have to wait months to see a specialist for any type of specialty work. The needs in northern Ontario now with respect to physicians and specialists are at a record high. They are at the highest levels we have ever seen in our special part of the province, which tells me that any and all of the initiatives that this government has tried to bring forward in the last six years to deal with this crisis have not worked. They are not working now. In fact, despite whatever the government has done—and, frankly, it hasn't been very much, and I'll get to that—this crisis is growing. More families, more seniors and more students are feeling the effects of that every day, when they have to go to emergency to access medical care because they can't get it because they don't have their own family doctor.

What has the government not done? I'll just give an example from last year alone. This government signed an agreement with the Ontario Medical Association over one year ago. In that agreement with the OMA there was a particular section, section 12. Section 12 committed both the Harris government and the Ontario Medical Association to bring forward new strategies with respect to the recruitment and retention of physicians across Ontario, not only in the north but across Ontario. There was a specific clause in that agreement that was to deal with the very serious problem we have with respect to recruitment and retention. Here we are, over a year

later—over one year since that agreement was signed—and absolutely nothing has come from section 12 of this government's agreement with the OMA with respect to underserved areas. There hasn't been one single new, different, innovative, imaginative idea that has come forward from either party to deal with the crisis we are facing and the crisis that it was clear we faced a year ago if the government and the OMA would actually put a clause into the agreement to refer to it. Not one thing has changed. Nothing has come from that agreement to date.

2020

Second, the government made a very specific promise last May in our community of Sudbury that they would come forth with what they called northern retention initiatives, this to deal with the very serious loss of emergency physicians and specialists from not only our hospital, the Sudbury Regional Hospital, but from the four other hospitals and four other major centres in northern Ontario. In fact, things were so bad that on about May 10 of last year the chief of staff for the Sudbury Regional Hospital, the then acting CEO who has now become CEO, and the chairs of the local medical associations held a press conference and, on behalf of some 260 local physicians, announced there would be an impending crisis beginning January 1 with respect to the ability of the hospital to have the emergency physicians and specialists necessary to deliver emergency care.

That was quite an event in our community. We have never seen a galvanization of the medical community over an important issue in such a way. It got large media coverage and, to their credit, those who were present called on the government to immediately come to our community to sit with representatives of our community and of the medical community to determine how we were going to respond to this crisis. Up to that point we had lost any number of physicians, any number of specialists, and those who were continuing to work in the system knew that in very short order we were not going to be able to deliver emergency care to people coming through the door at that hospital. So, senior representatives from the Ministry of Health came to the community in the middle of May last year—a big gathering, a two-and-a-half-hour meeting behind closed doors. When they came out, the ministry promised that by November 30 they would have in place a package of initiatives they could deliver in our community and the four other major northern centres to stem the loss of the physicians and specialists from our hospitals. They made a very specific promise, a very specific date.

You know that November 30 came and went, and the government made no announcement with respect to northern retention initiatives. The government had nothing to say when the deadline passed. An emergency meeting that was called for December 7 to deal with this issue was cancelled by the Ministry of Health and it was never rescheduled, and it hasn't been rescheduled to this date.

The situation has gone from bad to worse, because the situation on May 17, when the chiefs of staff of all five

northern hospitals and the chiefs of nursing for those five hospitals as well came together and told the ministry, for example, about the problem in Sudbury: since January 1999 our community has lost 15 doctors and specialists, including our only full-time thoracic surgeon and our only hospital-based neurologist; 22 family doctors have withdrawn their privileges from the hospital due to heavy workload, leaving 30% of Sudbury's population as orphan patients when admitted to hospital. By November 30, which was the day the government was supposed to come forward with its announcement on retention initiatives, that crisis had gotten even worse. There are only 14 full-time emergency room physicians, when we need 20. We need a specialist in each of obstetrics, general surgery, oncology, paediatrics and orthopaedics, since all of these have left since May. There is still no thoracic surgeon or hospital-based neurologist in place. Our shortage of specialists is 30% worse than the provincial average, and between 15,000 and 20,000 people in our region are without a family doctor.

The situation was so bad that the chief of staff for the Sudbury Regional Hospital wrote to the Premier of the province and the then Minister of Health, Elizabeth Witmer, on January 15, begging them—he said, "I'm writing you to make a plea for your assistance"—to do something about the impasse they had dealt with at the Ministry of Health, because nothing came forward despite the meetings and despite the promises, and we had a serious crisis on our hands.

I don't know if the chief of staff ever got a reply from the Premier, but I can tell you this: there haven't ever been any northern retention initiatives introduced in our part of the province to stop the loss of physicians and surgeons leaving the hospital. In fact, Sudbury Regional Hospital, to its credit, made a decision to continue extra payments in order to try and keep their specialists and doctors in place. They got all kinds of hassle from the Ministry of Health for the \$6 million that they had paid out of their own budget last year to try and retain those specialists and physicians in place to deliver health care. The ministry gave them no end of hassle in terms of actually reimbursing them for the costs that they incurred because this government did not then and has still not now come up with any solutions to deal with that serious problem in our hospital or the four other major hospitals in the major centres in northern Ontario.

What could the government do if it really wanted to do something good to deal with this shortage, this crisis? You see, the government, according to Dr McKendry, already spends about \$65 million on recruitment and retention of health care professionals in underserved areas. So if the government really wanted to admit that that \$65 million isn't really working, if the crisis is worse than ever before and decided they'd do something different, there are a couple of things they could do.

First of all, they could take the freeze off the community health centre program that this government has had in place since it was elected in 1995. We are the beneficiaries of a community health centre in our com-



munity, a francophone community health centre that was set up under our government to deal with the very large francophone population, many of whom did not have access to a doctor who spoke French. To their credit, a local group worked for a very long time to put together a proposal which we funded. We know that that model works. It is extremely effective in attracting and retaining physicians. That is because those physicians work in a team with nurse practitioners, with dietitians, with other health care providers to provide a quality service. They don't only provide primary care—that is, treatment—but they also focus on prevention and health promotion so that we can keep the population using that service healthy for a longer time.

In my community, the Centre de santé communautaire has had an application in to this ministry for over two years now to increase the operating funding of the main centre so that the two satellites that it operates under its global budget can become full centres too and provide a full range of service, not only in the city of Sudbury but in two other communities in my riding, in Hamner and Rayside-Balfour. They have three physicians who are prepared to come and work full-time delivering service to the francophone population in those two communities if only the government would take the freeze off the operating dollars of this program and allow them to hire.

Do you know that we have now 80 communities in this province that have put in a proposal to the Ministry of Health for a community health centre or that are actively working on a proposal for a community health centre? Communities know that they will be able to keep not only their doctors but nurse practitioners and others in the community if they can work together in a team approach, if they can bill by salary, if they can have some kind of quality time with their families, and they will because they work in a team. Communities know that that particular model would work very well to deal with the doctor shortage we've had. But here we are, six years later, 80 proposals underway, many of them into the Ministry of Health and still this government refuses to take the freeze off so that we can develop new community health centres or expand the ones that are in existence, like my own, and actually allow people to access health care services where they live.

Secondly, if the government wanted to do something with that \$65 million, the government could establish a program whereby they pay nurse practitioners to work with physicians in their offices to deliver primary care. We have right now over 160 licensed nurse practitioners who are not employed in their field today because the government has not provided an ongoing mechanism for them to be paid to work in the health care system. We are graduating nurse practitioners every year from 10 universities in this province and we're graduating them into unemployment when their particular skills are more needed than ever before.

2030

If they were allowed to work in a doctor's office, if the government would set up a funding model to allow that

to happen, the nurse practitioners could deal with patients who come in who are not critically ill, who have stitches that need to be dealt with, who perhaps have to have medical examinations that could be dealt with, who could do all of those things themselves and leave the burden of dealing with critically ill patients on the physicians in those offices. We could maximize the use of both health care professionals and deal with even more people who don't have a family doctor now if the government would only find a permanent mechanism to allow nurse practitioners to work—160 not employed as nurse practitioners even though they graduated as nurse practitioners because there is no funding mechanism in our province to pay them to provide care to people who need it. I know that many physicians in our part of the province would be very happy to have nurse practitioners working with them in their offices if there were only a mechanism for them to be paid.

If the government wanted to do something really important, something that has long been recommended, something that has been recommended by at least one government adviser and maybe by two, but we haven't seen his report yet because the government hasn't released it publicly, so we don't know what Peter George actually said—but Dr McKendry certainly said in December 1999 that it was time to establish another medical school, and that medical school should be in northern Ontario. The government only has to look at the model that was implemented in Sudbury and Thunder Bay in the early 1990s. In Sudbury and Thunder Bay we now train and license family physicians. Those folks go through their four years of medical training at one of the five established medical schools in this province and then they can apply to get a licence as a family doctor. They can apply in rural Ontario or southern Ontario or they can apply in Sudbury at Laurentian or in Thunder Bay at Lakehead.

I was proud to be part of the government that established the family residency programs in those two communities. We knew that if we could train health care professionals in an ongoing, focused way in our communities, they would be much more likely to stay and practise in our communities.

The family residency program has proven how true that is. As graduates have been leaving the program after their two-year study, they've been tracked through a group in Sudbury. Every year after they graduate, 75% of the two classes open up a practice somewhere in northern Ontario. What's even more important, though, is that five years after they've graduated, tracking over the last three years now has shown that 70% of those family physicians are still in place, working to serve the needs of people in northern Ontario. You can't get much better retention rates than that. Those retention rates from that program are even better than the retention rates from the residency program in southern Ontario, where only 15% of the graduates stay to work in rural Ontario. That is the model upon which this government should build and that is the model upon which a proposal went in from Lakehead

University and from Laurentian University to the Peter George panel, encouraging the experts who sat on that panel to recommend to the government to agree to an independent medical school operating between Lakehead in Thunder Bay and Laurentian in Sudbury.

The really neat thing about the model is that the proponents have made it very clear that we need to do things differently than they're doing at the five medical schools. We need to focus on aboriginal health care. We need to have a particular focus on graduating francophones who can deal with people who need health care in their own language. We need to deal very directly with the fact that in only five major centres are you going to have big hospitals and lots of technology, and everywhere else across northern Ontario you're going to have to be much more general in your specialty if you're going to be able to deliver health care in that community. The residents and the interns and the technology just aren't there, and they're not ever going to be there in so many of those small communities that you and I represent, Speaker.

So Lakehead and Laurentian made a submission to the George panel in July, and we yet have received no word about what the recommendations were that were finally made from the panel to this government. That's why I raised the question with the minister today, because the public, especially in northern Ontario, need to know what the panel has to say about the creation of a northern medical school.

It will not be good enough if the panel recommends, and then the government accepts, to have only satellite campuses established at Lakehead and Laurentian. I'm not interested in having a medical school in my part of the province that's going to be run by Toronto or going to be run by Western or going to be run by McMaster or going to be run by Ottawa, because I think we have the capacity and the capability and the imagination and the skills and the medical personnel to run our own medical school independently in northern Ontario; four full years, full classes, a full faculty, in northern Ontario.

I know that Mayor Gordon and the other mayors have been very vocal in also saying to the government, and I've got some of the editorials here—Mayor Gordon, who is the mayor of Sudbury and a former Conservative cabinet minister, was here for the throne speech two days ago—that it will not be good enough to have a satellite run by the southern Ontario medical schools.

The time to make a change is now. The crisis continues. If the government really wants to change things in the long term, it should take some of that \$65 million that it is currently spending on incentives, which are not working because the crisis continues to grow, and announce that they will establish an independent, full-fledged medical school in northern Ontario where we can actually train people where they need to work and live.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** It's a pleasure tonight to speak on the motion for interim supply. I'm confident that this motion will receive unanimous consent here this evening. After all, it's a motion that allows us to pay the nursing homes, hospitals, doctors, municipi-

palities, the general welfare recipients, the children's aid societies and suppliers' accounts. Without this motion, we cannot pay all of the services that are necessary.

Thornhill is located in York region. York region has a number of hospitals that have received a lot of funding from this government. It's a growing region. As such, the funding is going to the areas of growth. Of course, York Central Hospital has received funding, and Southlake has received funding.

Also in Thornhill we have the Shouldice Hospital that provides specialized services for specialized care. This hospital also received some funding recently because of the wonderful work they do and how efficient they are.

In the last few months, I had the opportunity in Thornhill to host some round-table discussions and round-table sessions, asking the communities for their input into what the government's future plans and future initiatives are. I hosted these on various topics. The topics were mainly on those that my office has received numerous calls on. One was funding for independent schools, another was transportation and transportation gridlock, and the third one we hosted was to deal with the issues over Ontarians with disabilities. These were very, very well attended. In a number of them, we had anywhere from 20 to 30 people, attended also by local politicians. The one on transportation was one that was attended by a number of councillors, because they recognize that they need to share in finding the solution for the transportation problems.

With that, I also had a meeting with our transportation minister, who is very receptive to listening to input from various communities. I sent him a letter with all of the input that came out. I have two pages full of the input, but I'd like to focus on some of the things that they suggested with respect to transportation.

#### 2040

There was some discussion around the toll roads and the 407 and how people felt about having to pay to use the 407. Some felt if it was going to allow them to get to their workplace or wherever they were going faster, they really didn't mind paying, because there were other roads that are available for them to use that are not toll roads, and if we're going to solve the gridlock problem and the problem of all these cars being on the road, it's not a bad idea to have toll roads in Ontario. They did say they don't want any of the present highways to become toll roads but they are not opposed to any new highways that are created having a partnership with the private sector to provide the service for those who want it, need it and are willing to pay for it.

There was also a lot of talk about better planning and how the municipalities, the province and the federal government need to work together towards that solution. It's a solution that all parties have to work together on.

There was talk about the GTSB and its role. That needs to be improved and more defined on what that role should be.

The one that I found most interesting was the last session we had on dealing with Ontarians with dis-



abilities. It was interesting to hear that some of the people who came either had a family member who was disabled or were disabled themselves.

The biggest topic at that session was on the whole issue around the parking permit for the disabled and how easy it is for anyone to get the disabled parking permit. This is just a blue sheet of paper that anybody can photocopy and laminate, and you can take it with you wherever you go and just put it on your car. They had some ideas on how we could solve the issue of that problem. Quite frankly, some are able to get it too easily. All it takes is a doctor's certificate to be able to get a parking permit. I will be speaking to the minister about some of those ideas that came out, trying to find some solutions so that the parking spaces for the disabled are in fact for the disabled, not for anyone who happens to know a person who is disabled and manages to get that parking permit and put it in their car. Some interesting solutions were around having their picture right on the permit, a hologram that can't be reproduced. So there were a lot of very good ideas that came out of that session.

I will be hosting two more sessions. One will have to do with environment and one will discuss amalgamation, because there are a number of chambers of commerce within York region that are encouraging us to look at more efficient ways to serve our constituents. They're looking at the province to take a leadership role in coming up with some solutions. Certainly we feel that everyone needs to come to the table and be able to offer the solutions for it. We are not going to force it on to any municipality. I think if they come to us with a possible solution, we need to listen. We need to look at it. We can't close our minds and our eyes to more efficiencies for the community.

The people in Thornhill are very supportive of the consultation sessions I am hosting in my community, and I know some of my other colleagues are doing that as well. During the budget process, I know that a number of other colleagues of mine—

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I am doing it.

**Mrs Molinari:** Raminder Gill mentioned that he did it in his riding and his community. So we're a government that goes out and seeks input, gets the consultation and takes that back, recognizing that there's a lot of input we get from the community and you can't say yes to everyone. You can't please everyone because they come with some conflicting comments. They recognize the fact that it's the role of the government, it's our role, to take all of that and then be able to make the decision that best suits all of Ontario and not just one specific community.

I am going to leave some of my time to one of my colleagues, the member for Northumberland, because I know he wants to speak as well, but I do want to talk about some of the wonderful mayors we have in Thornhill. Don Cousens is very supportive and does a lot of wonderful work within the town of Markham. In Vaughan we have Lorna Jackson, who is also very supportive and very active in the community. And of

course, Bill Fish, who's the regional chair, is also one who is very co-operative and has done a lot of work with respect to the transportation issue and is working quite well with all of these communities and all of the councillors.

So I'm quite pleased with all the local representatives we have in Thornhill because they understand that the government has a role. They understand that they also have a role and that we need to work together in order to come up with the solutions like transportation, environment, amalgamation and all of the issues that come forth to us in our daily work.

I'm proud to be here and talk about some of the wonderful things that are happening in Thornhill and some of the good people we have there.

I had the opportunity to attend a number of sessions in York region. One was the early learning program which we've recently introduced. Certainly as a government we believe in early childhood learning and we have pilot projects in York region that are doing quite well and there are places that we can emulate through the province of Ontario.

Before I close, I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome our new member from Parry Sound, Norm Miller. I had the opportunity of spending a whole day in the riding canvassing, and I must say that it's a wonderful community. They are very fortunate to have Norm Miller here representing them and he's very fortunate to be representing such a wonderful community. I met a lot of wonderful people there and I'm glad I had the opportunity to do that. Welcome, Norm.

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River):** In my short time here I just want to express some concerns I have which have been expressed by other people about interim supply. My constituents have asked me what this is all about. I said that the government is looking for some money to pay the civil servants and for some of the programs that are in place and they said, "That's a good thing." I said, "Yes, we should pay the civil servants and do the programs," and then they said to me, "Isn't there something called a budget, where you lay it down and we would know the money is there for a long time?" I said, "Yes." Then I basically explained to them the fact that the government has taken off four months and no one knew where they were, and the fact is that they themselves are now coming back here on this day and saying to us all, "Could you all just approve some money so that we can pay the civil servants and for some of the programs?" They were appalled, because they thought this government was a government of efficiency and they talk about running a business, and they are far from that.

It is really sad to know that since December—and now at the end of April and going into May, the government is sitting down and saying, "We've got to sit late because we need this money to pay." It's very appalling to know that they conduct themselves in that kind of manner.

We were all elected to serve the people, and I'm not quite sure if the members are around enough or if the Premier is around enough to say that we can exchange some of the concerns that I see in Scarborough-Rouge

River for the hospitals and the concerns about the students, as I see as I drive along on the road passing the schools and the kids are out on the roadside here, and this government, which is having a great argument and debate and confusion within the school system—teachers are just demoralized and they're on the streets—said, "We won't take any action." This efficient government, this government which has a lot of money, has really not done anything for working-class people or for working families. They have just been brutalized in every way.

So what did they do? They arrived here last Thursday and they set down 21 steps, they say, for direction in the 21st century. I don't think they realize that the 21st century started some time ago. They're way into the 21st century and they just went and announced 21 steps right now of all that—21 steps. I can hear the footprints and the beats that are coming. These feet are coming with these 21 steps and are going to play havoc. They're going to put the boots to working-class people right now as they're putting the boots to doctors and they're putting the boots to the hospital system and to education.

2050

In step 10 they talk about bringing about a better system for education and allowing parents and teachers and what have you to assist, and they should be away and not interfere with the running of education conducted from the central office here. What they have done is centralize their power right up in that room in the back there on the second floor, the cabinet there. That's where they've conducted business completely, hidden away from the people of the province, hidden away from the people who have elected them, and the people are concerned. As a matter of fact, they are completely concerned because they feel that democracy has been undermined in every way possible by this undemocratic government that we have here today.

I had noticed of course they are bragging in step 14, but they're going to build another bureaucracy about training and retraining centres in which they are going to deliver training and access to trades and professions.

Studies have been done over and over. We know what's wrong. The one main step, if you want to do that, is to implement all of those studies that have proven that many of the people who are foreign-trained want to have access to their profession. What they have done and what they have kowtowed to is the fact that many of the professional associations have been dictating to government a long time and they don't have the guts to tell the professional associations about access and opening to these people who are trained abroad, who can now have an opportunity to work in this environment, to contribute to their family, to contribute to the economy, to contribute to their children. But many of those well-trained individuals are out there driving taxis or doing other things and this government doesn't have the guts to do it. They just talk about it and they make more studies about it and nothing is done.

It really appalled me to know that here is a government that says they really have the guts to do

things and they wouldn't even turn up in the Legislature. They haven't been around for four months. We haven't seen the leader on the first day of the House. On the first day of the House, I would like to see every single member here who is anxious to be a part of this debate. But the leader of the government is nowhere to be found at all. Before he has this 21-step opportunity that he has talked about, we say, where are the details? It's like we say we're going to have a pause for a commercial now. We have to go out and sell it. Sell what? There are no details to this. It's empty, and each day the dribbles will come through, the dribbles of what they will do. And the same old thing will happen and they're hoping that it can carry them through.

They long awaited some of the policies of the Liberal Party, which we have delivered to you, and said, "OK, if you think we're hiding anything, here it is. Here are certain things to resolve some of the problems which you are fighting about. Here they are." They look at it now and say, "It's not workable." And we said, "Where was your policy?" Nothing is there; empty. Not only do they have no policies, they are not even around.

All they have done is make sure they've wreaked havoc with the teachers. They are demoralized, these wonderful individuals who are teachers. Parents are confused. Children are at a complete loss. Students are lost. They are on the streets now, and this government is completely ineffective. They've now come here and said, "We need some money to pay the civil servants. We need some money for our programs." Where is the leadership that you're supposed to be offering? The first thing is, you have to be around to have some sort of leadership. Where is that leadership? It's nowhere to be found across this Conservative government that speaks in a lot of rhetoric and a lot of nice talks. Who has been suffering more than the working-class people and working families out there who are trying their best, who now have to shuffle between getting a babysitter for their children to go to classes and spending more money than is necessary, and very much so talking about their tax credits and what have you, giving it back to the people, but in the meantime, dropping a lot of user fees all over the place and people are paying much more for that, paying much more for programs than before?

I would challenge this government first to appear in the House to debate the programs, to bring forward a sense of the budget and not drag it down. They weren't even ready, with all the holidays and the golfing and whatever they would have done. Our leader, Dalton McGuinty, and we in the Liberal Party were ready from December to be right back here, but you couldn't face that. You had no policy, you had no programs. All you have done is talk about giving back money, and it has produced nothing.

You float on the fact that you have so much money, the time is so great. The new Minister of Finance was so overwhelmed by his position. In his first announcement he said, "Things are so good I'm going to just give out a lot of money. Things have been great; really good for this



province." What they have done is they hooked him, brought him back in and said, "It seems there is some sort of recession maybe down the road. Just keep quiet. You don't know what you're talking about."

You know what? They have no plans, they have no policies. They're just talking about having the taxpayers' money, throwing it around as they wish and saying, "You take \$200 and solve all the \$10,000 problems that you have outside of here. And look at what we have done. We have given back the money into the people's pockets."

But the students are on the streets today. The teachers are demoralized. The hospitals have a lot of backups. Where was that policy? Where was that budget? You are coming here today and asking us, "Please, unanimously, give us approval to pay the civil servants. Give us the pay to do the programs, please."

The whole thing about it all that is so appalling is the lack of leadership. It is so appalling to know that this government bragged and talked about, "We need another term in which to put the hardship, to put the boot to the people," and talked about your footsteps. What I'm hearing is that those footsteps are boots, giving the boot to many of the working-class people, giving the boot to the students, giving the boot to people who would like to be sharing in this great economy that we speak about.

I just want to say we are prepared and ready, and the more policies you want, we will continue to deliver them from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals. We'll continue to feed it to them. We don't mind. As a matter of fact, we encourage you to use them, because our interest is the people of Ontario, not political posturing. We like to see this province prosper and everybody share in the wonderful wealth in this great province that we have here.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I've just been sitting here for the last 10, 12 minutes or so listening to the member from Scarborough-Rouge River rant and rage, trying to work up an emotional hype here. All he's been talking about is attendance and when the House does sit or doesn't sit.

What's important is the record. Have a look at the record of this government: 800,000-plus net new jobs created in the last five and half years or so. That's the kind of record I'm proud of, having over half a million people off welfare; welfare numbers that were spiralling while you were in government, numbers that spiralled while the New Democratic Party was in government. That's the kind of record, if I were you, I would be very embarrassed with.

We have a record of cutting taxes by—the last count I had was 166 tax cuts, but I believe it's gone up considerably since then. That has stimulated the economy of Ontario so that now the revenue coming into the province has increased by some \$14 billion, I'm told. That's the kind of record I'm proud of. It's productivity.

What was the Liberal record when they were in government? They doubled spending. They were the favourites for tax, spend and borrow, and they did all three very effectively. Then, what happened with the NDP and their record? They doubled the debt and

spiralled us into bankruptcy. That's where we were going. How long did they sit in the last year? I understand it was something like 25 days or even less than that.

What is important to measure is productivity. They get all hung up with counting their marbles or counting the days, when in fact you should be saying what's going on in Ontario today.

They get hung up on gridlock on the highways. Why is there gridlock on our provincial highways today? It's because of the increased number of trucks that are out there delivering goods that people are producing and buying. It's gridlock because of the number of people who are driving to work—over 100,000 more people driving to work now than were driving to work back in 1995. That's the kind of measurement we need in Ontario.

I look to this vote to continue that kind of productivity in this province, and I certainly hope the opposition is prepared to support it this time, because in the past they have not.

**2100**

When they oppose and when they do not support a bill such as this, they're voting against health care, a system that's now costing 44% of the operational dollars here in Ontario. They're voting against education, the public system, the universities, the colleges that our young people go to. That is what they're voting against. They're voting against the municipalities and the dollars we transfer to those municipalities. They're opposed to all of those municipalities, some 500 of them out there, when they vote against it. That's the MUSH sector we transfer the money to. They're not supporting our police in Ontario so that we have proper security. When they vote against this bill, that's what they are indeed voting against.

I want to talk just for a very brief moment about some of the dollars that will be transferred. Some \$16.8 million will be transferred for construction of a new hospital in West Northumberland. This hospital was approved in our last sitting—70% funding. Last Friday was the kickoff of the fundraiser, and with the kickoff they had raised, at that point, \$10.3 million in the community of West Northumberland. There is only \$2.5 million left to go in that campaign. That's what this vote will be helping to support, to build hospitals such as that particular one. My hat's off to the chair of that fundraising campaign, Bill Patchett, and also his campaign assistant who was looking after leadership donations, Bob MacCoubrey, and also certainly a great big thank you to the Northumberland Health Care Corp board and their chair, Brian Hart.

Late last fall, I had the opportunity to make an announcement in Bancroft about funding for a new health care facility there. The member was very upset that that particular member was not involved. This is a member, like all of those in the opposition, who had voted against funding that particular hospital and funding all health care. I'm really quite confused why they'd be opposed to such a bill as that. It's time they got on the

bandwagon and supported what they really believe in. They stand up here in question period and you would think they really believed in health care, yet I expect—I hope not, but I wouldn't be surprised—that they'll vote tonight against this interim supply bill.

On another occasion, just to point out how confused some of the members in the opposition can get, when quoted that the \$200 tax rebate was going to cost \$100 billion—that quote comes from the Belleville Intelligencer. I wouldn't want to just outright embarrass that particular member, a member who sits in the Liberal Party, but he was only out by \$99 billion. On the other hand, what the heck, what's \$99 billion between friends? If that had been true, by not paying it back, they could have paid off the whole debt, or just about. It just shows you how confused they can get.

This is so important. Just imagine, if this payment didn't go through this evening, we'd be blocking some of the inspections of our food supplies here in Ontario. They wouldn't be thoroughly inspected. We'd be blocking the inspectors who go out and look after the environment. We'd be interrupting the suppliers who are maintaining our highways and building the infrastructure. Going through my area, they're now putting in the centre barrier, a tremendous safety feature. It's been down to one lane. I hope people don't mind the inconvenience of some of the one-lane traffic.

This payment will go to help nursing homes. It will go for general welfare. We hear so much concern in this Legislature on the other side of the House about people on welfare. When they vote for this, they'll be supporting people who are on welfare. If they vote against it, they'll be voting against those people. Children's aid societies, helping the young and vulnerable in our society, that's where some of those dollars are going. They'll be going to physicians. They'll be going to hospitals.

Health care has increased in Ontario since we took office by some 27%. It increased in the last two years by some 19%. As a matter of fact, when we took office, we were spending some \$17.4 billion. This past year, it was over \$22 billion and it is still climbing. Thirty-eight per cent of the budget was going to health care when we took office. It's now at 44% and climbing. By 2014, I'm told, probably 100% of all provincial dollars will end up going to health care. We know that is not sustainable, but we do have to support it. I would just plead with the federal government, which agreed to a 50-50 formula, to return partway to that.

In the days of Brian Mulroney, we were getting 18% from the federal government in support for our health care dollars. That deteriorated to 7%. It's now back up to 11%. I plead with the opposition to work with their federal cousins to return the health care slash they made from the Brian Mulroney government and to take it back up to that level of 18%.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Further debate? The member for St Catharines.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity, short as it is, to speak in the House this evening.

I want to say, first of all, for the people who might be watching, that this Legislature has not sat since the middle of December. Can you imagine the absolute furor in Ottawa if the federal Liberal government had announced it wasn't going to bring the House back till late in April? They brought it back in January. I could just hear Mike Duffy and the Conrad Black press and the Toronto Sun and CFTO's Tom Clark, and all those people in an absolute white fury at the thought that the federal Liberal government would keep the House out of session for four months.

But silence was there. I know why you people keep the House out of session. You can get away with it. Did I read one column about it? No. Was there one television sequence on it that the opposition didn't have to prompt? No. You people got away with it. So the wise guys in the Premier's office will say, "Aren't we smart? We put one over on everybody."

You have to go beyond that. You have to look at the democratic system and say, "Is that right?" I don't mind if you're sitting here and you're accountable. We ask the questions and you give the answers you deem to give. If the public determines that is appropriate, that they're more satisfied with your answer than the answer the opposition might provide, I may not like that, but I accept it because that's the democratic process, but when you keep the House out of session for four months and then the Premier talks about accountability, that's just a little hard to take.

We in this House are not allowed to make reference to the absence of members, and sometimes it's wise, because sometimes there's illness and other good reasons for people not being here, but I am very disappointed that the Premier of the province has selected to be in other places this week. I did not say "absent"; I said in other places. Like George Bush, he heads off—George W. Bush in this case—to sell the tax cuts, or in his case, to sell what he considers to be the government program.

I think it's the responsibility of the Premier to answer questions in this House. If the questions are questions the public accepts as good questions and the government gives good answers, that's the way the system should work.

The Premier is not a person who is a bad performer in the House. He's a person who has been in the House for some 20 years. He's had the opportunity to be here. It's important for the sense of accountability that we have whoever happens to be the Premier of Ontario in the House to answer questions, and not simply to call the House into session and then go on a road show across half the province.

**Mr Mazzilli:** He's going to be at a hospital in London tomorrow. You call that a road show?

**Mr Bradley:** There are some important issues to deal with. They don't simply affect ridings such as mine; they affect some of your ridings, including perhaps even the yappy member for London—not this one, of course, the other one—who is carrying on. Not my friend, Bob Wood. He's respectful.



There's the issue of the doctor shortage. I just ask my colleagues in the House what the situation is in their area, because I thought that maybe in St Catharines and Niagara it's different, that it's a more critical situation. What we're encountering right across the province is a virtual crisis in the lack of doctors who are available, not just family physicians, but we also have a situation in the Niagara region where many specialists such as ophthalmologists and dermatologists are in short supply. This is a crisis for many people. It is estimated that there are 20,000 adults in the Niagara Peninsula who are without a family physician.

2110

I think there are a couple of things that happened. One of those that I don't think we looked at as a society was the age of the doctors out there. We had at one time a lot of doctors. I don't think we recognized that a lot of them were getting close to retirement age. Years ago, there were doctors who worked literally into their 80s, who stayed on; they may not have been as active in their practice. Today you're not seeing that as much.

Second, demographically speaking, there are more women in the profession. Women, because they are child-bearing, have a special responsibility in the home as well. So it makes it much more difficult, in fairness to women in the profession, when they are the ones who bear the children and have some additional responsibilities. To ask that they work 90 and 100 hours a week is unacceptable.

We have to look at all of these factors—the number of people who graduate. Some members of this House may be surprised to know that in all of Canada only 17 ophthalmologists graduated last year. That's for all of Canada.

**Hon Mr Klees:** I knew you would mention ophthalmologists.

**Mr Bradley:** My friend from Oak Ridges knew I would mention the ophthalmologists because we have a critical problem there. But I think as a House, as a society—and this is always hard to do in this House because it is a partisan House—we're going to have to come up with some ideas, as a collective in this House, for trying to find an answer to this, because it's a critical shortage. Part of it involves nurse practitioners and their appropriate utilization. Part of it refers to primary health care reform and a model that will work to help more people have access to a family physician. Part of it will be incentives.

The member for Niagara Falls had a disincentive resolution or bill before the House that dealt with this issue. It didn't get entirely great support in the House, but it really shows how people are getting somewhat desperate. They phone you, they phone me, and they expect that we're going to provide a doctor for them. We can't do that. Our job is to try to find them.

There are foreign-trained people who are very capable. They have to be brought into our system, and I think we have to find a way to do that more quickly than we have in the past. It wasn't a crisis in the past so we didn't have

to find that faster method of bringing those people on stream.

So there are a number of problems out there, and I think as a Legislature, perhaps a committee of this Legislature would look at some solutions to this problem. I don't want to sit here and condemn right now, because it's too critical a crisis to condemn you people. It's most important to ensure that we have some answers.

It was mentioned here that I should congratulate Norm Miller. I want to tell members that after he delivered his maiden speech this afternoon I had the opportunity to both welcome him to the House as one of the members of this House and to congratulate him on his speech. I saw, as he walked down the aisle with the Premier and the new government House leader, the smile on his face that could only be the smile of a descendant of a person who was the Treasurer of this province before, of course, and the Premier for a period of time in Ontario. That knowing smile was there, and we certainly like to see you in the House, Norm. We know you will work hard on behalf of your constituents—and we always have to say in opposition—at least till the next election, because they always say that to me in my riding. They always say at every election that I'm going to be gone in the next election. We're all vulnerable to that.

Let me say as well that in designated situations there's a need for some additional hospital funding to allow our hospitals to function in a better fashion. Some people have said they want accountability out there. I don't think there's anything wrong with accountability in the whole system. What I worry about when I hear the words of—I affectionately refer to two-tier Tony only because there's a little bit of t-t-t in there that you can say and it sounds good. I can say that when my friend Liz Witmer was the Minister of Health, even though sometimes we thought maybe you were moving toward a two-tier system, I thought she would be the person standing against it. I've looked at the book that is read most often by the new health minister, called Code Blue. It's some extreme right-winger who has an extreme right-wing answer to the health care problems. I hear all this talk about how much it's costing and I can see certain people—not all of them; there are some moderates over there—in that cabinet who want to move toward a privatized two-tier system. I urge those of you who are the moderates—I know who some of you are—to ensure this does not happen.

**Interjection:** Name names.

**Mr Bradley:** I won't name names; that gets everybody into trouble.

I'm also concerned about the price of natural gas that we're having to pay now. If you cannot control it—I never believed in the deregulation of natural gas, but that's what you have now—I think we have to look at people of modest income and provide to those people—it's hard to find out exactly who they are—a bit of financial assistance to help them meet those costs.

You're moving into another area that is very dangerous, and that is the area of deregulation and privatization of hydroelectric power in this province. I warn you not to

get into that one. It was a Conservative government that had a lot to do with the building of a good system of providing electric power in Ontario. I'm sure there were some Liberal governments too, but there was a Conservative government that, way back when, provided a good foundation for this. I hate to see you dismantle it while worshipping at the altar of privatization and deregulation. In other words, for an ideological reason, you will turn around now and get rid of a system that for practical purposes has worked quite well for the people of Ontario. I urge you not to move to what California and Alberta and some other areas have moved to.

I want to say as well that if you're looking for a place to save money, I've got it: \$235 million worth of self-serving partisan government advertising. You could save \$235 million if you would simply renounce that. I was watching a program where they had interviewed someone in Britain. It is an independent position, and I kind of liked that idea. They review government advertising to see whether it's acceptable or not, because there are messages out there, like getting the flu shot, that there's nothing wrong with. I didn't like the Premier's picture on it, but getting the flu shot is legitimate communication, if you don't always try to make something partisan out of it.

So there we are. I say to the taxpayers' coalition—my friend Frank Sheehan will be listening to my speech at home, I'm sure; he used to be in charge of the local tax-

payers' coalition—that the silence has been deafening in their criticism of this government squandering \$235 million on self-serving government advertising.

The last thing I would mention is to remember another book that the former Minister of Municipal Affairs used to read in this House, called *Merger Mania*. Because not only has Dr Andrew Sancton of the University of Western Ontario pointed out the fallacies of the arguments in favour of amalgamation, but now the C. D. Howe Institute, another right-wing, may I say, think tank, says, "Please do not walk into these mass amalgamations."

With that, I leave members of the Legislature to make a decision on interim supply.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mrs Ecker has moved that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of the civil servants and other necessary payments pending the voting of supply for the period commencing May 1, 2001, and ending October 31, 2001, such payments to be charged to the proper appropriation following the voting of supply.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

It being nearly 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2121.*



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## CONTENTS

**Monday 23 April 2001**

### GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

<b>Interim supply</b> , government notice of motion number 4, <i>Mrs Ecker</i>	
Mrs Ecker .....	47
Mr Hardeman.....	47
Mr Phillips .....	49
Mr Kormos .....	51
Mr O'Toole.....	54
Mrs Pupatello.....	57
Ms Martel .....	58
Mrs Molinari.....	62
Mr Gill .....	63
Mr Curling .....	63
Mr Galt .....	65
Mr Bradley.....	66
Debate adjourned.....	68



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Assemblée législative  
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Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 24 April 2001

Mardi 24 avril 2001

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 April 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 avril 2001

*The House met at 1332.*

*Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### LET'S BUILD A BRIDGE MUNICIPAL TOUR

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** My first goal after accepting Dalton McGuinty's challenge to be the municipal affairs critic for the Ontario Liberal Party was to attempt to connect with municipal leaders across the province. That's why in February we launched the Let's Build a Bridge tour in response to some 80-plus invitations from communities all across Ontario—large, small, rural, urban.

It quickly became apparent that what Aristotle said was true, that if you want to know if the shoe fits you have to ask the person who wears it, not the person who made it. It quickly became self-evident that there were two basic themes being expressed as we travelled across Ontario: one was the basic mistrust that municipal leaders hold the province in, and second, provincial legislation has hampered their ability to build strong, vocal, prosperous communities.

One municipal leader told me, "Municipalities would do a whole lot better if the province would just leave them alone." Another said, "All we have received so far from this government"—by way of legislation—"is disabling legislation."

I know the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—because I've met with him—shares some of these concerns: concern that we need to start rebuilding bridges between municipalities and local communities.

I would like to invite the minister and others who share the concern for that to join with me in subsequent phases of the tour so that we can hear from municipal leaders and begin to build those bridges of trust and respect that are so important.

#### CLARINGTON BUSINESS EXPOSITION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It is my pleasure to stand in the House today to talk about just one of the positive events taking place in my riding of Durham, one designed to help promote business growth within the municipality of Clarington.

The second annual Clarington Business Exposition, or Cbex, is being sponsored by both the Clarington Business

Group and the Clarington Board of Trade. Businesses from Bowmanville, Newcastle, Courtice, Orono, Tyrone and Newtonville, to name but six, will be on hand in Bowmanville to show customers and businesses what they have to offer. They're open for business.

I would like to take a moment to recognize a few of the members who have been involved in coordinating this important project: Victoria Greene, Ron Collis and Adrian Foster. All members of the executive for both organizations have worked tirelessly, along with the Courtice Lions Club, which will also help throughout the day.

This year Cbex has attracted 70 businesses, 20 more than last year. There will also be a variety of exhibits from all sectors of Clarington's business community. They will be on hand to explain their services and act as the front-line service providers in the business community.

Last week in the throne speech our government re-asserted our commitment to economic growth, along with prosperity and accountability. Small businesses are the number one driving force in Ontario's prosperous economy, and I'm proud to see that Durham riding and our business people are taking the initiative in finding new ways in which to deliver their services.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** I rise today to mark the 86th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. April 24, 1915, was the start of a planned and systematic campaign to eradicate the Armenian people. One and a half million Armenian men, women and children were brutally murdered.

At the time, the world community sat idle and did nothing. The stage was thus set for other genocides and human tragedies. In fact, upon unveiling his final solution for the Jewish people, Adolf Hitler noted to his aides that the world would not even lift a finger because, in his words, "Who today remembers the Armenians?"

What is doubly tragic about the Armenian genocide is that today much of the world refuses to acknowledge the horrific events. The perpetrators still deny the truth.

This is an open wound that can never heal, because peace can only be achieved when we have justice, and justice cannot exist without the truth and the truth is not divisible by two.

I was honoured to stand in remembrance with members of my community over this past weekend. Every

year I've been proud to participate in a youth vigil here on the grounds of the Legislative Assembly.

Recent events around the world will give members of this Legislature pause to remember the human tragedy of genocide and to give the survivors of this horror the recognition they seek and deserve.

### HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERS

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It is an honour to rise this afternoon to pay tribute to the thousands of men and women of Ontario who act as hospital volunteers.

In this, the International Year of the Volunteer, and this being National Volunteer Week in Canada, it is important that we as provincial legislators recognize the efforts put forth by the citizens of this province, citizens who spend many hours of their time making our hospitals more humane, warm and comforting places to be in. I'd like to use three hospitals in my riding as examples.

First, the Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital: this hospital, under the leadership of Volunteer Services Director Sandi Johnson, has 60 to 70 active volunteers every day of the week. The volunteers range in age from 14 to 80.

The second and third hospitals, the North Simcoe Hospital Alliance made up of the Huronia District Hospital of Midland and Penetanguishene General Hospital, have a combined total of approximately 300 volunteers who donate almost 25,000 hours of their time per year.

In all cases, the volunteers enhance the job of paid staff and do not take a paying job away from anyone. They work in the gift shops and coffee kiosks. They help with patient feeding, pastoral care, hairdressing and operate the magazine and book carts. They help with clerical support and reception desks. They are there for fundraising and special events. They all have a special love for their hospitals. Whenever you meet them, they have a warm and friendly smile for you.

I'd like to thank the volunteers who put so much effort into the hospitals of Simcoe North, and I encourage all members to acknowledge hospital volunteers from across our province.

1340

### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Again, the Mike Harris government has failed the people of northern Ontario. Again, this government has turned its back on the people of northern Ontario.

As we speak, Northern Development and Mines Minister Dan Newman is up in Sudbury making an announcement about a virtual reality medical school The people of northern Ontario do not want virtual reality. We want a real, independent medical school. We want professors. We want people coming to northern Ontario. We are tired of this government playing word games with the people of northern Ontario.

Do you know what else is shocking about the announcement today? This morning in the scrum, the Minister of Health was unaware of the northern health travel grant. He was unaware of the problems of the northern health travel grant. I say to you that 70,000 people in northern Ontario have sent you a petition saying we have to increase the northern health travel grant. It is a sad commentary that I stand in my place today and say the working families of Ontario, the working families of northern Ontario in particular, have again had the government's back turned on them.

The reality is Mike Harris, Tony Clement, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and the entire Tory caucus do not care about northern Ontario. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus care about working families in Ontario.

### MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAXES

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I rise in my place today to respond to an article on the front page of the Hamilton Spectator, written by Joan Walters, that's headed up, "Texas firm wants to be our taxman." The article states that the government is actually entertaining the idea of allowing a Texas company to come into Ontario and be responsible for the collection of outstanding municipal property taxes. They've even gone so far as to hire a gentleman named Mr Ralph Lean, who is reported as being a top fundraiser for the Mike Harris Tories.

It's no wonder they're drooling at the prospect of getting in. We're talking about property taxes in 1999 that were paid to the tune of \$18.5 billion and \$1.7 billion of that was outstanding in 1999. In Hamilton, for instance, it's \$66 million.

Let me give you a couple of reasons why this is a bad idea. First of all, it follows the John Snobelen school of politics that says, "Create a crisis when you want to cover up doing something unpopular." You bungled your property tax reform. It took six or seven bills after your initial bill to fix the mistakes you'd made in the previous bills. This is your problem. You created it. Ontario taxpayers shouldn't pay the price.

Lastly, this is law enforcement. By extension, does this government accept the idea that Texas goons would come into Ontario and run our police services? I think not.

### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** Since December, I have enjoyed working in my Kitchener Centre riding, which, as you know, is one of the most successful and prosperous communities in all of Canada. Contrary to the Liberals, who by their statements yesterday think they had a four-month holiday since Christmas, I spent the last few months taking the opportunity to meet with literally hundreds of constituents from a wide array of varying backgrounds and interests.



Everyone is both interested and concerned about what our government will be doing to ensure that Ontario is positioned to combat the looming economic shift from a boom economy to a slower-growth economy. I sought their advice, asking my constituents what they thought the government should be doing to prepare for a tougher economy. Not one of them wanted to see this government increase taxes. The majority of them are urging the government to find further ways of reducing taxes. The message from my constituents was also very loud and clear that they wanted this government to become more efficient in how it was spending their tax dollars. They even asked that we ensure we control municipality spending, including the salaries and benefits municipal councillors vote to themselves. They wanted assurance that every one of the tax dollars will be accounted for and used with maximum efficiency. Accountability and increased efficiencies continue to be priorities that the taxpayers in my riding want to see this government focus on in this term.

I want to assure my constituents and all taxpayers in the province that our government is committed to honouring our tax cut pledge.

#### ALGOMA STEEL INC

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** Yesterday Algoma Steel sought and was granted court protection from its creditors while a debt restructuring plan is being negotiated. The company has assured the employees and pensioners that it will be business as usual.

Algoma Steel is not the Algoma Steel of 10 years ago. It is a low-cost producer with a state-of-the-art direct strip mill. It is Canada's third-largest steelmaker. ASI employs 4,000 employees, has 8,000 pensioners and purchases \$150 million in goods and services from the Sault Ste Marie-Algoma area. Its predecessors have been making steel in Sault Ste Marie for over 100 years. It has been an important and significant anchor in the Sault Ste Marie and Algoma economies throughout its history.

I would ask the Premier, the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and particularly the Minister of Northern Development to convey to ASI and the communities of Sault Ste Marie and Algoma their concern over these developments and to offer the good offices of the Ontario government to work with the community, the employees and the company to bring about a strong, vibrant, competitive ASI in this challenging situation.

#### BREAST CANCER

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** I rise today to draw the attention of members to the seriousness of breast cancer. A study published in a recent journal of the Canadian Medical Association found that women in Canada with breast cancer sometimes wait six weeks for surgery. While these findings clearly indicate that more has to be done to address the issue, several doctors in my

riding have been able to reduce waiting times significantly. Last week, after these findings were released, Dr Kent Sorsdahl from Stratford commented that he and his colleagues take breast cancer very seriously and local women wait no more than three weeks for surgery. I commend Dr Sorsdahl and his colleagues in Stratford for their work and the seriousness they give this deadly disease.

I'd also like to recognize Carol Miller, a breast cancer survivor in my riding who has established The Quilt, a breast cancer support project. Since 1998 Carol has been gathering quilts from across Canada to support women who have experienced or are experiencing breast cancer and to educate the public about this disease. For her first event in 1999 Carol received 134 quilts donated from across Canada to auction. Carol continues to work tirelessly in my riding and across Canada to support women with breast cancer and raise public awareness.

Please join me in thanking Carol Miller and the doctors in my riding for their work in the fight against breast cancer.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Before we proceed, in the members' west gallery we have a former MP, Geoff Scott, who was the MP in Burlington-Wentworth, which is now the riding of Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot. Would all the members please join in welcoming our guest.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker:** Unanimous consent? Agreed.

#### MOTIONS

##### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following changes be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Mr Barrett and Mr Galt exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr Barrett assumes ballot item number 37 and Mr Galt assumes ballot item number 8; and Mr Tascona and Mrs Molinari exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr Tascona assumes ballot item number 49 and Mrs Molinari assumes ballot item number 3; and Mr Parsons and Mr Bartolucci exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr Parsons assumes ballot item number 25 and Mr Bartolucci assumes ballot item number 2.

1350

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The government House leader has moved that notwithstanding standing

order 96(d), the following changes be made to the ballot list for private members public—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Dispense. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that the following substitutions be made to the membership of the committees of the House:

The standing committee on estimates: Mr Miller for Mr Stewart;

The standing committee on finance and economic affairs: Mr Hardeman for Mr Arnott, Mr O'Toole for Mr Young, Mr Spina for Mrs Molinari;

The standing committee on general government: Mr Miller for Mrs Munro, Mrs Mushinski for Mr Barrett;

The standing committee on government agencies: Mr Ouellette for Mr Spina;

The standing committee on justice and social policy: Mr Barrett for Mrs Mushinski, Mrs Molinari for Mrs Elliott;

The standing committee on the Legislative Assembly: Mr Arnott for Mr Wettlaufer, Mrs Marland for Mr Clark;

The standing committee on public accounts: Mr Gill for Mrs Mushinski;

The standing committee on regulations and private bills: Mr Mazzilli for Mr Coburn and Mr McMeekin for M<sup>me</sup> Boyer.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Mrs Ecker has moved that the following substitutions be made to the membership of the committees of the House—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Dispense. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### PUBLICATION OF RECORD OF DEBATE

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that the record of debate during orders of the day during the afternoon of December 4, 2000, be now published electronically and in print, but that the name or names of any young offenders in such remarks be first expunged in all versions by suitable methods as determined by the Clerk of the House

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the—a point of order. OK. Any debate on that? The House leader, the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** This is a most unusual step or course for the House to be taking or travelling. We're not aware of any single incident in the history of this Legislature, the history of Hansard since 1942, which is when Hansard was established by way of motions—Messrs Drew and Frost having made that motion establishing a Hansard—calling for a stenographic record of events in the Legislature.

We are all aware of the circumstances that gave rise to this. We're aware that those circumstances resulted in a police investigation; that the police investigation concluded that no charges were to be laid under either the Young Offenders Act or any other criminal legislation and that the rationale provided for that decision was that the immunity of the House attached to those statements, the identification of young offenders, those young offenders having been identified in the Legislature—not only identified but published by virtue of the transmission—as compared to a forum or a venue outside of the Legislative Assembly.

The New Democratic Party caucus is, as indicated, prepared to consent to this motion being put to the House. It's suggested that, were there not consent, the motion in itself would well be objectionable in that one would query whether the House has the authority to merely delete portions or sections of the Hansard transcript, the transcript merely reflecting what took place. The incidents of that historically in Ontario are rare, as well as being rare across the country and in the federal Parliament. The Senate takes far more liberties, as we have discovered, where senators quite liberally amend what's called the "blues," the draft transcript. Indeed, we're told by authorities in the Senate that even the editors of Hansard will take great liberties in addressing or adjusting Hansard to reflect what they felt should have been said or would have been said, were people more temperate or more on point in their particular comments.

We, because of the very unique circumstances—and it's acknowledged that were the names of these young offenders merely to be published in the Hansard, the same rationale that gave rise to the reluctance to lay charges against the member of the Conservative caucus who identified these young offenders would apply, that the mere publication in Hansard doesn't constitute an offence.

But as the motion very carefully states, the effort is to expunge these names so as, I put to you, to effect compliance with the spirit of the Young Offenders Act, a statute of Canada, criminal legislation flowing from the federal Parliament, in contrast to perhaps a legal or technical breach. Certainly this Parliament does not want to be a party to a breach of even the spirit of the legislation.

So New Democrats are wary and reluctant and certainly insist that no precedent is being established here; that this is the most unusual of circumstances, that the names of these young offenders, were they published, would not in themselves constitute an offence, based on the rationale used by investigating police officers, but that this House is interested in and, by virtue of its vote on this motion, will be demonstrating its interest in complying with not only the letter of the law but the spirit of the law, at least as it applies to the Young Offenders Act of Canada.

It is for that very, very restricted and limited reason that we are supporting this motion, and I repeat once again, having no intention whatsoever of suggesting that



this is regular or that this motion, without there being unanimous consent, would not similarly be out of order. It would be a significant violation of the spirit of the Hansard to start using, for instance, the majority of the House to try to tinker with Hansard after the fact.

We all say things here; some things we regret saying, things like were said by the member who identified these young offenders, which resulted in a police investigation. But it doesn't change the fact that they were said, and that's why Hansard is there. We live with it. At the end of the day it's a public record, it's a historical record, as it should be, and it should, in all circumstances, reflect what in fact was said. It is the uniqueness of this situation that prompts us to support this particular motion to protect the identities of these young offenders who were regrettably identified by a government caucus member.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** Just to follow up a bit on the words of our House leader, I just wanted to underscore the thought and the effort that went in behind this motion leading to this point. I was the House leader at the time when this initially came up as to whether or not we would expunge, and said that I had some concerns about what this meant. It started to get just a little too close to George Orwell's 1984 and going back and changing history. So we did a survey and, as our House leader has pointed out, other than the Senate, there are very few examples of anything similar to this.

The record should underscore the significance of the exception that's being made, but I would add that we've had similar circumstances and we didn't take the same action. There have been incidents during the course of this government's power in Ontario where a name was mentioned that shouldn't have been—in a throne speech, no less. That was followed up with a police investigation and no action was taken there. To the best of my knowledge, that name is still there. I know that in the previous government there was a cabinet minister who, again inadvertently, mentioned a name that was on a briefing note. That wasn't supposed to happen and also the record wasn't changed.

1400

Not only are we creating an exception; we are taking a different course than we have. The reason for standing today is that the sanctity of Hansard should only be violated upon the greatest of extreme circumstances and this, we believe, is one of those. But anyone looking back down the road or from other jurisdictions should understand that we have not done this lightly, nor do we intend to make it a practice to go about changing the actual historical record of what took place here in this chamber.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? Seeing none, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wish to clarify the comments of the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. In reply to a question posed by the member for Lambton-Kent—

**The Speaker:** It is not a point of order. You can clarify your own record. You can't clarify somebody else's record. Only they can do that. Sometimes people think the questions and answers are wrong. Unfortunately, it is not a point of order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** No, it is not a point of order to clarify the situation. What you may want to do is ask another question in the House, which would be totally acceptable.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I rise in the House today with my colleagues Helen Johns, associate Minister of Health, and Brenda Elliott, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, to outline components of our future direction for health care in Ontario.

Health care is something all Ontarians cherish. Here in Ontario we're fortunate to have one of the best health care systems in the world. We are also fortunate to have some of the finest health care professionals and facilities in the world. You need only look down the street, south of this building, to see many examples of the excellence in Ontario's health care system.

Since taking office in 1995, we have made significant progress in modernizing the province's health system to ensure that Ontarians have the integrated, accessible, quality health services they need—and to which they are entitled—at every stage of life, no matter where they live in this vast province.

I would like to share with the members of this House just a few of the things we accomplished over the last six years.

Since 1995 we've made the tough decisions needed to modernize our health system. We took immediate action on fundamental reform and we built on the strengths of the existing health system. We've invested in Ontario's long-term-care facilities, in community-based services, in health promotion and disease prevention programs, in nursing initiatives, in mental health reform and in drug programs.

For example, we have introduced and funded a province-wide flu vaccine program so that each and every Ontarian could receive the free vaccine. This initiative entailed an investment of some \$38 million.

We established three new full-service cardiac centres, and three additional new catheterization labs. Coupled with some \$138 million in new funding, we have seen an increase of more than 50,000 additional cardiac procedures.

We have increased funding for cancer treatment by more than \$328 million. We have also committed \$186

million to construct five new regional cancer centres and to expand existing cancer centres.

We have increased the number of MRIs in Ontario to 42. This is a significant accomplishment from 1995 where there were only 12 MRI machines available in this province.

We increased funding to hospitals to \$8.4 billion for 2000-01 fiscal year. We continued with our historic investment of \$1.2 billion for 20,000 new long-term-care beds, an increase of some 35%. These will be the first long-term-care beds to be built since 1988.

We have provided more than \$375 million in annual funding to create new, permanent nursing positions across all sectors; invested in continuing education for nurses; invested \$10 million annually to create 106 nurse practitioner positions; and funded an aggressive retention and recruitment strategy for our nurses. Our government has also proclaimed the Expanded Nursing Services for Patients Act, which legitimizes the role of primary care nurse practitioners and improves access to primary care for patients.

Our government has also invested more than \$370 million on community mental health services, and passed new legislation called Brian's Law to ensure that people with mental illness receive the care and treatment they need. Our government also believes that our children deserve the best start in life. That's why we introduced the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program and have continued to expand the program so that new mothers and their babies receive the services they require.

It's clear that our government has been steadfast in its commitment to a health care system that puts patients first. We want to ensure that all people have access to quality health care, where and when they need it. Consequently we will be increasing health care spending for the sixth consecutive year. Once again, this spending will rise faster than the economy grows.

Health care spending has indeed increased at a dramatic pace: 27% in just five years; 19% in the past two years alone. However, double-digit increases in health care spending are no longer sustainable.

To increase spending without improving quality is unwise. To increase spending well in excess of economic growth is unsustainable. At the current rate of increase, within five years health care spending would consume 60% of the Ontario government's operating budget—up from 44% today and 38% since our government was first elected.

Responsible choices and tough decisions are needed, not merely to sustain but quite literally to save Canada's health care system. The Ontario government believes fundamental reform is necessary to save the nation's health care system, and our government is prepared and ready to lead the process of change. My colleague the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs will provide this House with more details on this initiative in a few moments.

At the same time as we address the sustainability question, our government will accelerate reforms to

improve the quality of Ontario's health care system. Last month, for instance, the Premier announced the creation of the Ontario Family Health Network. The government will ensure families have access to convenient, quality health care closer to home by establishing family health networks across the province. The government wants at least 80% of family doctors to join these networks by the year 2004.

Dr Ruth Wilson, a highly respected practising physician who brings a wealth of wisdom and experience, will lead the Ontario Family Health Network as the chair of the agency.

Working with the Ontario Medical Association over the past few years, our government has established 13 network pilot projects in six communities: Hamilton, Paris, Chatham, Ottawa, Parry Sound and the rural Kingston area. These pilots are a resounding success, with 170 physicians and more than 222,000 patients involved.

The family health networks will represent better co-ordination of patient care for more efficient, effective treatment.

To ensure Ontarians have round-the-clock access to professional health care advice, and to help relieve pressure on emergency rooms, our government will make its free telehealth service available across the province by the end of 2001.

The telehealth service is now up and running for people with 416 and 905 telephone area codes, as well as in northern Ontario. I'm pleased to say it will be extended in the near future.

#### 1410

But physician shortages remain a very real issue in many of our communities across this province. This government has introduced many measures over the past few years to help address this shortage. To help with physician recruitment and retention within our northern and rural communities, since 1995 our government has created 40 new residency positions for family medicine and specialties for practising general/family physicians to go back to resident training and then return to underserved areas. We've provided \$4 million for free tuition and location incentives to new doctors willing to practise in underserved areas. We've increased medical school enrolment by 40 positions and doubled the number of community development officers to help underserved areas recruit doctors in their communities. We've developed the Internet-based physician job registry, which matches communities looking for physicians with physicians interested in establishing medical practices in these communities.

However, despite these new initiatives, it's a fact that there are many communities that are still in need of a physician or specialist and we recognize that more must be done. That is why, on behalf of our government, I am pleased to announce that our government is committed to the development of a made-in-northern-Ontario medical school that will train medical professionals to practise in the north. Making use of the latest e-learning technology,



this northern medical school would fulfill the ultimate objective of bringing doctors to northern Ontario and keeping them there.

We're not stopping there. We realize that the physician shortage issue extends beyond northern communities. That's why I also am pleased to announce that in order to address physician shortages, the government will streamline the process for accepting foreign-certified doctors and set challenging targets such as more than doubling the capacity in assessment and training programs.

We will also be working with other health professions to improve our health care system.

Many in this province rely on naturopathy and other practices of alternative or traditional medicine. Knowing the significance of these practices, the government asked the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council to make recommendations on the best method of regulation and looks forward to acting on the council's proposals.

In particular, this government understands the value and importance of traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture to many people in Ontario. It wants to work with practitioners on the creation of a self-financing, regulatory college that would establish professional standards for these traditional practices, and will act quickly once the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council issues its report.

Finally, before I conclude my remarks today, I would like to talk about the importance of health privacy. A modern and effective health system requires modern and effective protections for health information. I commit to this House to work with the minister responsible for privacy protection to introduce privacy legislation that recognizes the unique sensitivity of personal health information and the need for strong safeguards.

It's clear there are many challenges that lie ahead of us as we strive to ensure the provision of excellent health care for those who need it, and meeting these challenges will not be easy. But our government cannot and will not be complacent. We will not be content with the status quo. It is clear that in order for Ontario's health care system to be sustainable and excellent, we will need innovation, new thinking and accountability to get this job done. We need to lay out a vision and a plan that will improve the quality of Ontario's health system and ensure we have successfully built a health system to serve the present and future generations of this new century. Today's announcement is the very first step.

I would like now to turn the floor over to my colleague, the Honourable Helen Johns, the associate Minister of Health.

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** I intend to speak in particular to the growing shortage of medical professionals in small towns and rural Ontario. Our government understands the problem and intends to act.

It is partly a matter of lifestyle choices by these professionals and partly the lack of availability of people to share the workload. For instance, we know there is a

direct link between where medical professionals train and where they end up practising their skills. There is a tendency to settle where you learn.

But we are all aware that in recent years the medical professional shortfall has not been restricted to remote or northern areas. The government knows this. Therefore, the government will support the development of expanded rural medical training opportunities in rural Ontario.

Over time, we would expect our support of expanded rural medical opportunities to produce success rates in our program equivalent to the existing Ontario family medicine north residency program. Seventy per cent of that program's graduates have located practices in the north. A key success factor is that trainees in this program spend two years of training in the north, and we expect to see similar results with this program having a southern rural focus.

But we must also better organize how we provide family care and, thus, the future expansion of telehealth, telephone health advice service for the 519 and 613 area codes, is an important key. Another key element in our strategy to stabilize the supply of available, quality health care in rural and small-town Ontario resides in the family health networks announced by Premier Harris. In short, we have identified the problem of shortages in rural and small-town Ontario and are determined to meet and solve it both on the supply and the demand sides.

This government remains committed to quality health care for all and, where necessary, will accelerate reforms to improve the quality of Ontario's health care services. Through careful and strategic planning for the future, we will ensure that the future of Ontario's health care system is sustainable, accountable and available to all.

Now I would like to turn the floor over to my colleague, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Brenda Elliott.

**Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** You've just heard from my colleagues what Ontario has accomplished over the past five years and what we are committed to do here in Ontario for the future. This is occurring at a time when the federal government cut the Canada health and social transfers to new lows. It is time for the federal government to step up to the plate and commit to high-quality health care that Ontarians need and want.

We need to address the issue of sustainability in our health care system. We share the view of many experts that unless substantial changes are made, the health care system, as we know it today, will consume all public spending.

We agree with the federal government in the need to reform medicare. We congratulate Mr Romanow on his appointment to lead the federal Commission on the Future of Health Care. Mr Romanow comes to this challenge with a wealth of experience and recognition from his leadership as Premier of Saskatchewan that the health care system needs to be saved.

Before his resignation as Premier of Saskatchewan, he initiated a study in his own province about the need for change in the health care system. The study that he commissioned on health care in Saskatchewan stated that, and I quote, "pouring more money into a system with known inefficiencies will not improve it.... More money for an often poorly functioning health care system often means less money for education, job creation and tax relief, all things that can contribute to improving the health of the people of Saskatchewan. Thus, spending more on the current health care system without addressing its underlying problems would be irresponsible."

We agree. That is why there needs to be an open, national discussion on the future of health care. The commission must be free to consider all aspects of the system and explore all possible solutions. Here in Ontario, we want to be part of a dialogue that is broad enough to identify real, lasting solutions to the accountability crisis. However, we believe that these discussions need to happen immediately. Mr Romanow will not report to the federal government until November 2002. We feel this is too long to wait before acting to save medicare.

1420

That is why our government will be moving forward to ask patients, doctors, nurses, hospital administrators and all Ontarians with an interest in the future of the health care system to identify reforms and to seek consensus on the best way to allocate the billions that we spend annually on our health care system.

Historically, our health care system was funded by the federal and provincial governments, with the original 50-50 principle of medicare and the tax base available to each level of government. Last September the federal government committed to restore some of the billions it cut to health and social transfers. This leaves the federal government's share of total provincial-territorial spending at 12% in 2000-01, 14% in 2002-03, but sliding back to 13% in 2005-06. This is unsustainable, and that is why our government is committed to improving the health care system. It is a priority for the people of Ontario, and we agree. We need to take action now if we are to have a health care system that is sustainable for future generations.

I would like to respond by also commenting on some remarks from Mr Romanow as he undertakes his study across Canada, and I quote:

"Ontario's speech from the throne underlines the pressing need for a national study of our health system. All Canadians want to find solutions to the problems in health care as quickly as possible, but they also want these solutions to stand the test of time. To do this, we will have to carefully review the health policy research and recommendations available, work with federal, provincial and territorial governments to bring forward sustainable solutions...."

We in Ontario understand that fully. We have listened closely to the people of Ontario, and I can assure you that we are willing to step forward to seek consensus and to

find a way to make the health care system that we so value sustainable for many decades to come.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Responses?

**Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor West):** My question for the Minister of Health is: How many times can we hear the same announcement? Speaker, is there a limit to the number of times this government can go forward as though they're advancing new ideas? This minister stood in the House today to talk about funding to hospitals. For the first time, we are at the all-time record high of hospital debt in Ontario. Some 77% of our hospitals are in debt. You must be accountable for the cuts that this government made to hospitals when you first took office. You have been trying to make up ever since.

Today we see a litany of examples of announcements and re-announcements, but I ask my neighbours and friends where I come from and across the province, is our health care better today than it was before you took office? The answer is a resounding no.

When we talk about nurses, you bring into the House today the notion of funding for nurses. We ask you, where are the nurses? All of the professional nurses' associations ask you the same question: Where are the nurses? They are barely being hired part-time across this province. You want to come in again and talk about primary care reform. You've been talking about this for six years, and today we see no further action. We just see one more repeated announcement after another.

We talked about primary care reform six years ago when you first came here. There is nothing new today that we are hearing from this minister. Despite the dire straits that 103 communities are in today, being so desperately underserved by physicians, we see one announcement made over and over again.

You came in today to talk about telehealth. Last night on television I watched your commercials on telehealth. Is this news for Ontario that everyone is to pick up a 1-800 number and call? This is not new, Minister. We want to see action; we don't want to just see rhetoric repeated over and over again.

This minister decides to come in the House and talk about medical schools. You've got the gall to talk about medical schools on the basis of, what, we e-mail you a doctor to the north? Or do we in Windsor e-mail our concerns to some doctor in some other place in Ontario? Those who are waiting in emergency rooms, do we e-mail the broken leg somewhere else to be dealt with? I ask this minister today to come in the House with real answers, like the ones that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals have advanced year after year. Today, you come in with more rhetoric.

This minister has the gall to talk about foreign-trained physicians. The ministry knows there are 450 doctors waiting in Ontario today who could practise here tomorrow, and this minister has the power, through the college, to set the regulation today for what they must do, not wait for yet another process, another streamlining, setting challenging targets. Minister, the doctors are here



today and they could be practising tomorrow but for your pen that won't make the mark on the paper to make it happen. We don't want more rhetoric. We want the doctors here.

We talked about privacy legislation for four months. While we were all away from this House, when we should have been asking you questions in this House, we sat in committee and heard our federal Privacy Commissioner call your last attempt at a privacy bill the Widest Open Access to our Health Care Information Bill. That's what he dubbed it. I look forward to seeing what you are going to invest in this House in the form of another privacy attempt.

These are just more announcements of the same. When are we going to see action by this government to deal with the real problems Ontarians are suffering under this government?

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** The government has failed miserably for working families. The government today has not announced another new physician training position in Ontario. They've re-announced 40 positions, positions they announced last year.

Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have a plan for working families. We will increase the number of physician training places in Ontario by 120. We will build a new, independent, free-standing medical school in northern Ontario, and we commit and have committed to working families that we will create satellite medical schools in places like Windsor and southwestern Ontario to serve the people of this province. Those details are out. We'll talk about them in the election. Working families can count on Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals for meaningful answers to our health care crisis.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** OK, we've had our fun. That's enough. Further responses?

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** The Minister of Health tries to describe this document as national leadership in health care reform. Then he goes on to try to do an Orwellian rewrite of history. He tries to refer to an integrated health care system.

The health care system in Ontario couldn't be more unintegrated than it is today. Ambulances have been shoved off on to municipalities. Home care is now being operated by private, for-profit companies; similarly, long-term care. The government talks about setting up a telehealth program but has no idea how you integrate that into the rest of the health care system. There's no integration here; there's just a series of announcements and misannouncements, none of which add up to an integrated health care system.

The government says they care about health promotion and disease prevention. The vast majority of public health units out there don't have sufficient budgets to do the specific work they're mandated for, never mind some of the health promotion and disease prevention they know is so important.

Then they say, "Well, we've done great things in cancer treatment." The first thing this government did was to cancel, literally cancel, cancer treatment centres that were half built. Then they eliminated the radiation technology program at the community college, with nothing to replace it. Then we had massive waiting lists for cancer treatment, and in an effort to cover that up, they started shifting patients to Buffalo, Cleveland and Detroit. Then to further try to cover it up, they put in place a health travel grant program that says to some patients, "Because of where you live and the kind of cancer you have, you get everything paid for," but says to other cancer patients, namely, in northern Ontario, "Because of where you live and the kind of cancer you have, you get virtually nothing." Disintegration—not something we should be proud of.

Then we have the government talking about how they've increased funding for hospitals. The first thing this government did was to try to close a bunch of hospitals, cut the funding of other hospitals, close a lot of beds, and after they created chaos and realized it wasn't going to work, they started putting the money back in to cover up the mistakes they made. But the result is a lot of money spent unwisely, money spent trying to cover up the mistakes that you made initially.

1430

You want to talk about nurses. This is a government where the Premier, in the insult of all insults, compared nurses to out-of-date, redundant Hula-Hoop workers, and then he wonders why so many nurses left Ontario. They say now that they want to return nurses to Ontario, but we know that nurses won't come back as long as you treat nursing as a part-time, on-call, on-contract temporary service. You don't pay it the dignity and the respect that the nursing profession deserves. Again, not a sign of integration, not a sign that the government knows where it's going in terms of health care, just announcement after announcement trying to cover up the fundamental mistakes that you've made.

Then they talk about Healthy Babies, Healthy Children. The reality is we have more children living in poverty in Ontario than ever before and we have more children forced to use food banks. This government actually claws back the child tax credit which is intended to help the poorest children. They're not helping; they're putting children further and further in trouble.

Then they have the temerity to say that to increase spending without improving quality is unwise. That's the history of this government. They have dumped more money into private, for-profit health care. They have disintegrated the ambulances and shifted them off to municipalities, despite the fact that the auditor says it's going to cost more money to operate that way. This government hasn't operated according to a vision or a plan. They have simply tried to spend more money to cover up the mistakes they've made.

Finally, just to show how lacking in integration this is, the most recent announcement is a private, for-profit cancer treatment program at Sunnybrook, which shows

just how lacking in vision you are. With the bonuses and everything else that's involved, the emphasis is going to be upon putting more money into the pot, not upon quality health care.

### INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** Mr Speaker, pursuant to section V, subsection 21(a) of the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly, I rise today on a point of privilege. I believe that my rights and privileges granted to me as a duly elected member of the Ontario Legislature have been abused by the actions of the former Integrity Commissioner, the Honourable Robert Rutherford.

The Members' Integrity Act allows a member of the Ontario Legislative Assembly the right to make a complaint against any other member when he or she believes there is an issue of conflict of interest. Subsection 30(1) states, "A member of the assembly who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that another member has contravened this act or Ontario parliamentary convention may request that the commissioner give an opinion as to the matter."

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, beginning in September of last year I made a series of complaints concerning what I considered to be the Premier's improper involvement with the Adams mine garbage proposal. These complaints were all filed with the previous commissioner, the Honourable Robert Rutherford. I received a response to my first two complaints. These responses I found to have been unusual and to some extent curious.

It is the role of the Integrity Commissioner to investigate whether there has been any wrongdoing, whether a member has acted contrary to the Members' Integrity Act. Instead, Mr Rutherford dismissed my complaint, not on the basis of the Premier's actions, but on the fact that at the time the city of Toronto was not proceeding with the shipping of its waste to the Adams mine. The commissioner stated, and I quote, "Whether Mr Harris conducted himself properly in supporting the disposal of Toronto's garbage in the Adams mine landfill site thus remains a largely moot issue."

This is tantamount to saying that as a member of the Legislative Assembly, it is permissible to act improperly as long as one is unsuccessful at it. I don't believe that is the intention of the Members' Integrity Act.

However much I disagreed with the substance and tone of the response, I understood I had to accept it. There is no avenue for appeal. The commissioner's response is final. However, on February 23 of this year a Toronto Star article written by feature writer Bill Schiller revealed that Mr Rutherford had a friend help write his report that cleared the Premier of any wrongdoing. In the article Mr Rutherford admitted that as the province's independent watchdog overseeing the ethics of MPPs, his use of outside help to produce reports was not a good practice.

The commissioner made a number of other statements, among them that: he could offer no assurances that his friend had not done any consultancy work for the government or any of its ministries; the report was typed off-site by someone other than the commissioner's own staff and then brought to his then office at Bloor and Bay Streets; the friend contributed at least 25% of the content of the report; he did not know what area of legal expertise his friend had or specialized in; the commissioner signed the report on December 27 in his office, at a time when it was officially closed and staff was on holiday.

Subsection 46(4) of the Legislative Assembly Act RSO 1990 sets out the jurisdiction for the assembly. It states that the assembly has all rights and privileges of a court for the purposes of inquiring into a list of offences. One of those, as set out in subsection (4), states, "It is an offence to interfere with an officer of the assembly while in the execution of his or her duties."

I believe interference took place while the commissioner was considering my complaint. There are many unanswered questions as to the extent of the outside influence and from whom it came. Not knowing who offered the advice brings concern as to who else may have been consulted on this issue. Having breached the bounds of his office, there is no certainty to the extent of the influence brought to this complaint, or where it came from.

I ask you, Mr Speaker, to investigate and to rule that what occurred here is an abuse of my privileges as a member of the assembly. I believe it is my right to have the Integrity Commissioner render a decision on any complaint, independent of any outside influence. I also believe that the complaint should remain within the office of the Integrity Commissioner and not be responded to by an unknown outsider on his or her home computer.

There are many unanswered questions I believe must be answered. It is important to ascertain who offered the advice and what, if any, relationship that person had with the government or with the Premier. Mr Speaker, I ask you on behalf of all members of the assembly to consider my point of privilege.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Speaking to that, Speaker, the member raises issues that are and have been concerns of ours since the, quite frankly, incredible revelations by the press. I think we can understand that the commissioner can adopt if he chooses, for instance, the written report of an author who is somebody other than himself. But as I understand the point of privilege being raised by the member, it remains a matter of concern, not just to the member but I suggest to all of us, that when the author is not known—because the press reportage identified that it was an author other than the commissioner, but the commissioner was very careful not to identify that author. Were it someone in his office, for instance—and most of us are well familiar with the very capable staff that the commissioner Judge Rutherford, as



he was then, and his predecessor had. Were one of those persons within his staff identified as one of the assistants authoring a report, we then would still be capable of understanding the source and the absence or presence of any real or perceived biases by that person.

One of the critical things about this is that there is an anonymous author of at least one response to a very serious and legitimate issue put to the office. That's number one. That means that none of us is in a position to—we respect the office. Quite frankly, Judge Rutherford did not perhaps receive kind treatment in response to those revelations, in terms of the manner in which it was disposed of, and we should all perhaps regret that.

But I encourage the Speaker, on behalf of New Democrats, to address very specifically the fact that it's not a matter solely of the commissioner of the day adopting the report of somebody else, somebody who perhaps was in his office and subsequently identified as the author of that report adopted by the commissioner. We have here an anonymous person who can't be tested in terms of his or her relationship with the Premier, his or her partisan relationships, his or her motives, and again, the mystery surrounding the absence or reality of remuneration for that person, the nature of the relationship between that person and the commissioner of the day, and the motivation for that person to engage in this activity. I think that adds to the concern as well.

1440

One understands, perhaps, the interest of a friend in assisting another friend or colleague, but it remains that this is all very much in the dark. The dilemma, then, I suggest to you, Speaker, very quickly, is how does the Speaker respond to this point?

I submit once again that the member raises a point because it was his specific request that resulted in the report which caused concern for him and which caused even greater concern when all of us are subject to the revelations about the anonymous, mysterious author, the unnamed author.

I submit to you that this warrants a reconsideration of any reports that were prepared during the tenure of this commissioner and an investigation to determine the anonymous author, as well as, I submit to you—and the New Democrats support the member and his request that the matter be readdressed.

New Democrats share in the concern of the member. We acknowledge that the privilege is his specifically in this specific instance, but quite frankly it's the privilege of all of us when we've seen this incredibly peculiar, bizarre twist of events, which can't be allowed to sit there. It can't be allowed to simply be a part of the record any more. It has to be addressed, it has to be visited and it has to be resolved.

There wasn't transparency at the time. I submit that it is incumbent upon you—with the appropriate investigation, utilizing your powers—to create transparency, to have all of the factors public, and to ensure that this particular issue is not allowed to rest merely as a cloud but is opened completely and thoroughly.

**The Speaker:** The government House leader?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** A couple of comments on this. First of all, it is quite distressing to hear what the honourable member is saying about Mr Rutherford, who has a very distinguished record for this country, for this province, as a war veteran and his many other services that he has given to us all.

I think it is also fair to say that Mr Rutherford has resigned. If there are any questions that an honourable member may well have about any particular rulings by Mr Rutherford that have occurred, it is certainly appropriate and it has certainly been the position of this government that every member has the right to go to the sitting Integrity Commissioner and ask that person to take a look at any particular issue that they may well see.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** That's not right.

**The Speaker:** On points of order or points of privilege, I don't want any heckling or yelling. The other side listened patiently while your member spoke. I'm going to insist on it. You can save it for when you've got question period, but when it is a point of privilege I need to hear it, and if you don't be quiet I'm going to name you very, very quickly.

Sorry for the interruption, government House leader.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I would also like to point out that the discussions about Mr Evans, about him coming to be an Integrity Commissioner in the event of Mr Rutherford's resignation, was something that all three parties agreed to, because we do respect and understand the importance of the Integrity Commissioner. So it is indeed within the purview, within the power of any member here to go to the Integrity Commissioner if they have any concerns about previous activities or conduct that may have occurred.

I think it's important to note that under the Members' Integrity Act legislation, it does clearly say, "The assembly and its committees shall not conduct an inquiry into a matter that has been referred to the commissioner..." so the legislation does speak to this point.

With all due respect, Mr Speaker, I do feel that this is not a matter for the purview of this particular Legislature.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The government House leader indicated that my colleague could speak with Mr Justice Evans. When one reviews the Members' Integrity Act, it is very clear that a sitting Integrity Commissioner does not have the jurisdiction or the authority to review a previous decision. I spoke with Mr Evans about this matter and he confirmed that point of view.

I should also point out and remind members that the issue we are dealing with now is whether or not undue influence was brought to bear on an officer of the Legislative Assembly. That is a very clear violation of the Legislative Assembly Act, and that, sir, is what we are asking you to consider.

**The Speaker:** I thank all of the members for the points—the member who raised it, the House leader of the opposition, the House leader for the third party as well as the government House leader. I will reserve my judgment and rule accordingly.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question today is for the Minister of Education. Minister, I guess it was close to five years ago that a representative of your government specifically said that your government intended to create a crisis in public education. Regrettably, you have been very, very successful in that regard.

Until the end of last year there were 57 work stoppages, affecting over one million Ontario school children. This year alone, to date there are three.

In Windsor, the education of 27,000 children has been disrupted for five weeks. These kids are now going to school on a rotating basis.

You are well aware that here in Toronto there are 560 schools now closed, affecting over 300,000 children; and, tragically, over 20,000 children with disabilities have been unable to go to school for four weeks.

Will you now accept, Madam Minister, that your policies have led to the turmoil that has become a chronic and permanent feature of public education in Ontario?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** The disruption in education that is occurring in some schools and in some boards across this province, what is happening to those students' education, is absolutely deplorable, and I think the parties should look very hard in the mirror when they are making these decisions about the impact they are having on students when they allow disagreements such as this to drag on for such a long period of time, because it is not fair to the kids, absolutely not.

Boards have resources to come to collective agreements with their staff. I understand that the unions involved here are fighting very hard for increased resources for their members—I appreciate that—but boards have the responsibility, as everyone does in their household budget, as every government has, to live within their budgets so that we are not putting the taxpayers of this province into deficit situations, because that is not fair not only to hard-working taxpayers, but it's also not fair to the kids, because it's mortgaging their future too.

**Mr McGuinty:** I'm going to ask the minister herself to take a long, hard look at herself in the mirror when it comes to these matters. This is the result, Madam Minister, of your handiwork. Your fingerprints and Mike Harris's fingerprints are all over this turmoil and instability in public education. You can no longer stand

by as a disinterested observer as this turmoil unfolds across the province of Ontario. You put the preconditions in place now for real difficulties at the local level. You're telling our boards how much money they've got, you're telling them specifically how it is that they spend it and you're telling them that for all intents and purposes arbitration simply won't work.

You can no longer stand by as a disinterested observer, Madam Minister. You have laid the conditions for disaster in public education through your policies. What are you going to do to deal with the matter, not only with the Toronto matter and the Windsor matter, but all of those yet to come?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** If the honourable member has labour questions about the process for arbitration, whatever, he may well wish to direct those to the Minister of Labour. But regarding the education circumstances, this government, this ministry—both the education ministry and the Ministry of Labour—have continued to work with the parties to support the parties to do what we can to have them come to fair collective agreements, but it is indeed their responsibility to do that.

Now, if what the honourable member is suggesting is that we should take away from boards their responsibility to come to fair collective agreements, he should say so, because you can't have it both ways. You can't on the one hand say we should give boards responsibility to make decisions according to local priorities and then on the other hand, as soon as they make a decision the honourable member doesn't agree with, say we should take it away from them. We don't think that's the appropriate fashion.

We have indeed improved funding again this year for all of our school boards. There is over \$310 million more that is going out flexibly, according to—

1450

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, why don't you just own up to the fact that you have taken \$1.8 billion out of public education on Mike Harris's watch? By so doing, you have created impossible conditions in our schools. We've got schools that are robbed of their enthusiasm, we've got teachers without spirit, we have children without extracurricular activities, we've got children who are knocking on doors selling chocolate bars so they can buy basic resources like rulers and dictionaries and atlases for their school work. That is the state of public education today in Ontario as a result of your policies. What is happening today is because of your handiwork; it has your fingerprints and Mike Harris's fingerprints all over it.

Again I ask you, on behalf of Ontario's working families, when are you going to begin to take responsibility for the mess you have created? When are you going to start putting some money back into the system to create real working conditions that will enable the parties to negotiate fair settlements?



**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member obviously didn't read his research briefing note; either that or he wasn't paying attention. We have just increased education funding yet again for the education system by over \$310 million. Maybe the Liberals think \$310 million of taxpayers' money is not a significant amount. It is a significant amount. It will go a long way to helping school boards.

The other thing is that we make no apologies for saying to all of our education partners that they have to live within their budgets, just as this government does, just as those working families he professes to speak on behalf of do. They have to live within their budgets. His position is that he—

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** Apologize to the kids.

**The Speaker:** Order. This is the last warning. You're not going to violently yell across like that. You do it again and you're named. Minister of Education, sorry for the interruption.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** His position is, "Let's just open up the tax gates. Let's let the boards tax property owners yet again. Let's solve all our problems by taxing people more." With all due respect, that is not the answer.

We have asked our boards to live within budgets. We've increased those resources. They have additional flexibility yet again—and obviously they have missed that—so they can settle fair collective agreements, so the kids can be where they should be: in classrooms.

#### FAMILY HEALTH CARE NETWORKS

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Health. One more time today we learn—and this is a year after it was first announced—that Mike Harris has talked about his target for 80% of our family doctors to be practising in 24-7 health care teams by the year 2004. The announcement was made one year prior.

On behalf of Ontario's working families, who are very anxious to have better-quality health care available to them around the clock, I'm wondering how you're doing with respect to meeting your target of 80% of Ontario's family doctors being enrolled in these family care networks. Can you tell us today, understanding that one year has now elapsed, and your target being 80%, what percentage of family doctors are now practising in 24-7 health care teams?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'd be happy to respond to the honourable member's question and report that, as I said in my earlier remarks in the minister's statement, I believe there are 170 physicians, certainly over 150, who have participated thus far in family health networks in five Ontario communities: Hamilton, Chatham, Ottawa, Paris and Kingston. There are, incidentally, nurse practitioners who are also participating in a number of these networks. I believe they have seen over 222,000 patients so far.

Of course, this is the start of a very exciting new phase of family medicine in Ontario. We wanted to work with the pilot projects first to get some bugs out of the system. We believe we have done so.

When the honourable member asks exactly why a family physician should be involved in this, they get peace of mind, they get a roster of doctors around them to work with them and it improves patient care. I think that's good for everybody.

**Mr McGuinty:** You're telling us that we've got 160 of our family doctors who are now enrolled in these family care networks. There are 9,000 family doctors in Ontario. You've been talking about this forever. You know what your predecessor Jim Wilson said. He said 1996 will be the year that primary care reform comes to Ontario. This is 2001. We've got less than 1% of our family doctors enrolled in family care networks. Ontario's working families can't wait 80 years for you to get primary care reform up and running.

Tell me, what specifically are you going to do to ensure you meet that target? It's one thing to hold a target out there, and it's quite another thing to achieve it and put in the plans that are essential in order that you in fact achieve it. What specifically are you doing to ensure we achieve that target of 80%?

**Hon Mr Clement:** We have created an agreement with the Ontario Medical Association so that we have the co-operation of the physicians of Ontario to meet our goals. We have appointed Dr Ruth Wilson, who is a very well respected family physician in the Kingston area, who is going to be the implementer, along with us, of Ontario family health networks. We have committed this government through our 2000 budget to \$250 million of Ontario taxpayers' dollars to ensure that we have a remuneration package for doctors who sign on to the family health networks, and that they have an IT package so that their practices are more modern and can track what has to be tracked in terms of patient information. If the honourable member wants to know more about this, I encourage him to log on to our Web site.

**Mr McGuinty:** I appreciate the minister has a sense of humour, but Ontario's working families aren't looking for virtual solutions. They're looking for real solutions. They're looking to make sure they've got access to a family doctor or somebody practising together with their family doctor on a 24-7 basis. You should know that the notion of taking a three-year-old at 4 o'clock in the morning in a snowy Ontario winter and putting them in the car because they're running a high fever and taking them to the emergency ward should be as antiquated as bankers' hours. We've got to get our doctors practising together with nurse practitioners, nurses and other health care personnel working around the clock.

The question I've got for you again on behalf of Ontario's working families is, when are you going to achieve that target of 80% and what specifically are you doing to make it happen?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Since I do in fact have a three-year-old, I know whereof the honourable member speaks.

I can assure the honourable member that the entire process by which we are delivering this is as fair as possible. It is designed to get us to the goal of 80% by 2004. That's the government aspiration. We have put our money where our mouth is. We have put \$250 million of taxpayers' hard-earned money to improve the remuneration, to improve the information technology for family physicians. We have created an implementation through Dr Ruth Wilson that is respected by both the participants and the family physicians, as well as the government of Ontario and Ontarians generally. We are implementing this very important transformation of family health services, and certainly it is our commitment that this will continue more successfully in the future as well.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy and it is about his deal to sell off Ontario's hydroelectricity system and drive up our hydro rates. Minister, your government talks a lot about accountability, but your numbers don't add up. A year ago, you were telling the people of Ontario that there was already a debt repayment charge in their hydro bills. In fact, on May 16 here in this Legislature you said that the debt repayment charge is "currently built into hydro bills and people have been paying it for years." You then went on to say that the debt charges in the future would "probably" be "lower than what consumers are paying now." Three weeks ago you announced an 8% increase in electricity rates and you said it's to cover off debt repayment charges.

Minister, people want to know who was telling the real story: Jim Wilson a year ago, when you said that this was already covered off, or Jim Wilson now, when you add a further 8% to people's electricity bills.

1500

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** If there's one reputation I have in this House it's for always telling the real story to the people of Ontario, whether it's as health minister or energy minister. In fact, in many ways I'm often the first minister to come along in many years to tell the people of Ontario the real story about a system, and I'm very proud of that.

The honourable member is correct in what he has said. Depending on your rate today, 35% to 40% of your bill coming into your home or business is debt retirement. It was a bundled rate in the past so there was never a line item in your bill that said "debt retirement charge," but certainly 35% to 40% of the gross amount of money that would come into our hydro companies goes toward paying off the \$38 billion worth of debt legacy.

Because we've had to spend \$2 billion on the environment recently—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up. Supplementary.

**Mr Hampton:** We didn't learn anything from that answer. All we know is that there was an 8% increase

and it's got nothing to do with debt repayment, because the debt repayment charge was already there.

We understand that there's a further 12% increase in hydro rates coming, only when you increase it a further 12% later on this summer, you're going to tell people that it's a payment in lieu of taxes. But the real story is, just like the debt repayment story, that this is about jacking up the hydro rates so that your corporate friends will be able to earn their profit level.

Minister, confirm or deny: is there another hydro rate increase on the way?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I'll finish the answer to the first part of the question. We've spent \$2 billion improving air quality from our hydro plants over the past years under this government, and frankly it started in 1993 under that government. That's \$2 billion less we had to pay toward the debt retirement program.

The auditor was very clear in January of this year. He said, "Because you spent all this money on environmental measures," which we should get some credit for in improving—we've got another \$1 billion as a result of the Minister of the Environment's recent air emission quality standards, which will meet or exceed the EPA standards in the United States.

We are committed to the environment. That comes first. That money is being spent. As a result, we had \$647 million worth of debt that we weren't able to pay off last year, and that's why the auditor encouraged us to come forward with this 8% increase, which is the first increase in eight years. Inflation has been 15% over that period of time. We've spent so much money on the environment that we weren't able to keep up with all of our debt repayment, and that's why the 8% is going to be used for debt repayment and the environment.

We've been very clear and honest and we've told the real story from the beginning, the first—

**The Speaker:** The minister's time is up. Final supplementary.

**Mr Hampton:** In fact the minister is trying to change his story today from yesterday. Yesterday he said that the increase was due to debt repayment. Now he wants to say it's because of environmental issues, and he tries to avoid answering the question, "Is there another 12% increase on the way?"

I put that question to him again: confirm or deny there's another 12% increase in electricity rates on the way, and, Minister, tell the truth. It's got nothing to do with debt repayment. That's already there. It's got nothing to do with payment in lieu of taxes. That's already there. It's got nothing to do with environmental issues. You said that was going to be handled by the private operators. It's got everything to do with, you've got to get the rates up there in order for your corporate friends to come in and buy and make a profit. Tell the truth.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** If you don't believe me, go look at the audited books of Ontario Power Generation. You'll see what they spent on the environment, you'll see what the debt is, you'll see what the auditor's report is. If you



don't believe the government, check with the auditor. Get your bloody facts straight, is all I can say, Mr Hampton. Get your facts straight, and stop scaremongering the people of Ontario.

The answer to your 12% made-up tax increase is, no.

**Mr Hampton:** What we've confirmed here is the rates are going up under this government for hydroelectricity.

#### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, you have indeed created a chaotic situation in our schools, and it is the unfairness, the inadequacy of the funding formula, that has done it, whether it's in Windsor or North Bay or Toronto.

But I want to address, just for now, the Toronto situation. Since the labour dispute happened, you have pocketed \$15 million that should have gone to the board. Minister, why don't you put that money back in the hands of the board so that they can go to the bargaining table and settle a collective agreement, so that you can get the children back in the schools and end the chaos you've created? Just give back the \$15 million that you've pocketed so we can negotiate a collective agreement. Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** With all due respect to the honourable member, nobody pockets any savings out of anything like the strikes that are occurring in some of the boards. All that money stays in the education system, as it should.

I've talked about the new money we've put in this year. We've also given boards more money for fuel costs, more money for teacher compensation, more money for special education. Dollars stay in the education system because we agree it's a very, very important priority. Another \$310 million more in new dollars has gone to boards. It's going to boards in a local priorities grant. They can put it to their local priorities.

I know he would prefer that we bring in a social contract to try and solve this dispute. I don't think that's the appropriate step to take.

**Mr Hampton:** I put myself in the position of parents listening to this minister. The fact is, you have pocketed \$15 million since the labour dispute began. If you give that money back to the board of education, where it belongs, a collective agreement could be settled today and the students could be back in the classroom tomorrow. That's the issue. Don't blather on about all the other nonsense.

Do you want the children back in the classroom? If you do, put the \$15 million you've pocketed back to the board of education and let them sign a collective agreement. Will you do that?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The members of this particular union have chosen to go out on strike. The so-called savings you are talking about—if you put it back in, as the member proposes, it's not going to pay for new

wages. It's going back into the education system. The money's going to stay in the education system, as it always does, because we believe in important investments in the classroom. That's why we gave school boards another \$310 million this year, so they can continue to move forward on improvements in the classroom like the new curriculum, like teacher testing, like standardized testing. Those are important quality improvements that we believe should be there.

All of the school boards and the unions are being asked to come up with fair collective agreements that are living within the budget. Those kids should be in classrooms. Those parties have the responsibility to negotiate those agreements. We are continuing to take steps to support them in that, and we may well take further steps if that is required.

#### CANCER TREATMENT

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** My question is for the Minister of Health. I'd like to ask you about Cancer Care Ontario. Specifically, I'd like to ask this Minister of Health, how do you give approval to a company without going through a tendering process, the opportunity for this company to walk in, use publicly owned equipment, have patients who are on waiting lists in Ontario go through existing cancer clinics, through this private company, which receives money from the government without having gone through this tendering process?

Minister, we understand that you're nicknamed Two-Tier Tony. We just want you to explain to the House today—when Dr Ken Shumak was asked this question as the CEO of Cancer Care Ontario, he said, "We did this in a very quiet manner because the public would be outraged if they knew."

Minister, we'd like to ask you, how do you go forward working with a private company at this level with no public tendering process?

1510

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I can certainly tell this House that the Cancer Care Ontario board, which is a board that is apart from the government, approved the proposal, and that a review of the board's practices and Management Board of Cabinet's practices indicates that all conflict of interest and procurement guidelines were adhered to.

I just go back to the public policy issue, which is, when given a choice as public policy-makers between sending an Ontarian with cancer to Buffalo or to Detroit for their care or sending them to Sunnybrook Hospital, we chose Sunnybrook Hospital, and we're proud of that.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Minister, I believe you should answer the question you're asked. Why would you hand over \$4 million to a private company for start-up costs when this company is using the facilities at Sunnybrook, they're using their equipment, they are using staff that ordinarily works at cancer centres during the day? You could just as easily have expanded hours in these non-profit cancer

clinics, but you chose instead to turn over Ministry of Health dollars—\$4 million worth—for start-up for this company.

Minister, I ask you: what start-up costs could they have? The equipment is from Sunnybrook; the staff are staff that work in cancer clinics during the day. In fact, the president is the former VP of Cancer Care Ontario. What \$4 million worth of start-up costs could there be? This is not a cancer care board decision. This start-up money came from the Ministry of Health. Minister, answer the question. I ask you again: how could you go through a private company with no public tendering process, the thing you could have done through the existing system?

**Hon Mr Clement:** That's where the honourable member is wrong. In fact, despite the investments and the reinvestments and the new money that has been put in by the government of Ontario, the existing system was not capable of increasing the amount of service for cancer care patients in Ontario. Given the choice that was created by the inability to respond, the way the system was responding was by sending them off to Buffalo, sending them off to Detroit, sending them off to Cleveland. To us, that is unacceptable.

If the honourable member wants to stop everything in its tracks, to cling to the status quo, to cling to a system that wasn't working, that's her business. But we on this side of the House will not accept that status quo. Our job is to give better cancer care to the people of Ontario where and when they need it, and we will not ever shrink from that purpose and that goal.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question today is directed to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I was pleased on April 16, 2001, to be able to inform the Quinte Healthcare Corp that they would be receiving one-time funding to put them in a better financial position to improve their performance this year. The Quinte Healthcare Corp, since its formation following the HSRC-directed merger in 1998, has been committed to efficient operation, with the ultimate goal of operating without a deficit. I'm proud to say that since April 1999 the hospital has brought the administrative and supportive areas of organization to benchmark.

In the throne speech our government committed to accountability at all levels of government, as well as across the broad public sector. Minister, can you tell this House what this means for the Quinte Healthcare Corp and other hospitals across this province?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. Indeed, on April 16 I announced a further \$177 million in one-time funding to put 68 hospitals in a better financial position, to improve their performance in the new fiscal year, but that does not come without strings, because we are interested in accountability. I should mention for the record that the Quinte Healthcare Corp

received \$1.85 million of that total. With the assistance of the honourable member for Northumberland we are working hard to get the benchmarks in place, to make sure that efficiency is job one when they're delivering excellent health care services to the patients.

I'm pleased with Quinte's work and their commitment, and we will continue to work with the member's hospital in order to achieve the clinical efficiencies necessary without reducing the clinical program, and that's the key.

**Mr Galt:** Thank you very much, Minister, for your answer. Minister, our government will be expecting hospitals to be accountable to taxpayers, but hospitals have concerns about how they'll be funded and how that amount is achieved. What will we be able to tell hospitals like the Quinte Healthcare Corp, and all other hospitals across the province, about funding in the future?

**Hon Mr Clement:** As the honourable member knows, there has been a consultation process through the joint policy and planning committee, which has been conducting regional consultations on a new funding formula for hospitals. But obviously there is a situation that involves funding already in place—almost \$8.4 billion of funding in place right now, up from \$7.7 billion for last year. That's a \$1-billion funding increase in one year—unprecedented in the history of Ontario. With this level of funding we are expecting hospitals to provide effective, efficient, accountable health care in their communities. Taxpayers need to know the funding is being used to deliver effective health care.

We're pleased to see that the OHA also wants to participate and seek some input from hospital executives. We will work with them as well as with other stakeholders and with patients to get the quality health care in an accountable and efficient way delivered to each and every patient in the health care system.

### MEDICAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** I have a question for the Minister of Health with respect to first-year medical school enrolment in the province of Ontario.

Your government, Minister, often compares the province of Ontario to a number of our competing American jurisdictions: the states of Michigan, Ohio and Illinois and indeed oftentimes to Quebec. The state of Illinois, with a population of 12 million people, has 1,064 first-year medical school places. The state of Ohio, with almost an identical population to the province of Ontario, has 981 first-year medical school places. The state of Michigan, with a population of 9.8 million, has 657 first-year medical school places. The province of Ontario, with a population of 11.5 million, had, until you're announcement last year of 40 new places, 532 first-year medical school places—half the number of first-year medical school places compared to these competing jurisdictions. How are we going to stay competitive in terms of keeping doctors if we're simply not training



enough, and why did you today let down the people of northern Ontario and of Windsor by failing to deal with the medical school shortage of positions in the province of Ontario?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member, who seeks to Americanize health care in Ontario. The fact of the matter is that we have been increasing enrolments in this province—he mentioned it in his remarks himself—from a lower base. That was the base that we inherited. There are more investments to be done.

We think that physician retention also involves ensuring that the physicians we have in the province who have graduated from our medical schools have the proper funding arrangements and have the proper incentives in northern and rural and remote communities to stay here rather than going off to greener pastures. That is the purpose of our announcements to date and certainly today as well.

Yet the honourable member is saying that we need more medical graduates. I agree with him. We need more medical graduates, not only from Canadian medical schools but also from other medical schools that fit our criteria and reach our quality care that we want here in the province of Ontario. That is the purpose of the announcement today, and we'll be following through on it.

**Mr Duncan:** If you don't want to look at American jurisdictions, look at the province of Quebec, with seven million people, four million less than Ontario. They train exactly the same number of doctors as we do.

If you won't listen to me and you're going to trivialize this, listen to the Canadian Medical Association, which says that the ratio of physicians to population is going to decrease by almost 22% in the next five years if we don't create an additional 500 medical school places across the province.

Working families don't need rhetoric from the minister; they need a plan. They need a plan to deal with this, not only in the short term but in the long term.

Minister, we've put forward a plan that calls for 120 new first-year positions—by the way, the same number that was recommended by the McKendry commission. We've put forward a plan for a full northern medical school and satellite training campuses in Windsor. Why won't you do what your own commission says and what a Liberal government will do when elected in two years, and that is, create 120 new medical school positions so that the working families in this province, when they need doctor, can get one.

**Hon Mr Clement:** I don't understand what part of my announcement earlier today he did not understand, but to the honourable member, if he listened closely, we indicated that we are moving ahead with a made-in-northern-Ontario medical school and with plans to deal with medical education in our rural communities. That has been our plan. That has been the recommendation. We have been studying it very closely and, as he knows, having meetings with stakeholders, with mayors through-

out the province, to deal with this issue, as well as with the local practitioners. That has been our plan. We announced it today.

That will mean more medical places in medical schools in Ontario. The first new medical school in decades in Ontario has been announced today. What part of yes does the member not understand? What part of moving forward with a plan does he not accept?

1520

## EARTH WEEK

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. First, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Minister Witmer to her new and very important portfolio.

Sunday, April 22, marked the 31st annual celebration of Earth Day, and I understand that more than 500 million people in over 160 countries participated in events designed to help our environment.

In my Durham riding there were several organizations and school groups taking up the challenge of protecting our environment. One example of the young people pitching in was last week's Central Public School's program, Eco Kids Club, helping Reverend Frank Lockhart's Valleys 2000 organization to clean up one of the municipal parks in Bowmanville.

Minister, would you share with people today how Earth Day was marked in other important places throughout this great province of Ontario?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** I think many members of this House took part last week in Earth Day activities. In fact Earth Day has grown in 31 years from a celebration on just one day to celebrations of a week's and a month's duration. Some of the events I had the opportunity to participate in involved young people, service clubs and just about every citizen who had an interest and wanted to participate.

One of the events that was interesting, I thought, from the perspective of trying to involve children in influencing adults to take better care of the Earth, was the project in one of the schools in Toronto that was entitled No Idling at School. We've gotten in the habit today of driving our children to and from school, and people are sitting outside idling their cars. So these children are being encouraged throughout the province to ask parents and friends when they pick them up to please don't idle. Certainly we can save—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm afraid the minister's time is up. Supplementary.

**Mr O'Toole:** Minister, it's clear that everyone can participate in their own small way to improve our environment in Ontario. In my own riding of Durham, for instance, real people like Reverend Lockhart, whom I mentioned, Martin Feaver, Deb Vice, Kevin Campbell, Glenn Barkey and Bernie London belong to a group called Protect the Ridges, which speaks out about the use and storage of paper sludge in agricultural areas.

Minister, what can the people of Ontario do to get more involved and celebrate not just Earth Week but our environment in general?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would like, on behalf of all of us in the House here, to take the opportunity to congratulate the many people who participated in Earth Day, Earth Week and Earth Month activities, and also for the leadership that's been demonstrated. Earth Week provides us with an educational opportunity. It raises public awareness of our need to protect the environment and the health and safety of people in the province.

Following through on what I said before, if we all walk more and drive less, that can make a very significant improvement to our air quality. As the weather warms up, we can consider green alternatives to pesticides. Of course, we can all take care to recycle, reduce and reuse. There are many initiatives we can all undertake throughout the year and I hope everyone in this House will demonstrate leadership in this regard.

### CANCER TREATMENT

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Minister of Health. I want to return to my question of yesterday about your agreement to allow Cancer Care Ontario to contract with a private, for-profit company. Yesterday I asked you for a copy of the contract you agreed to that will spend public dollars on a private, for-profit service deliverer. Despite all your rhetoric about accountability, public institution spending and transparency, you refused to give us a copy of what you call a private contract.

Your government created this crisis we see now in cancer care and cancer treatment. You cut funding, you delayed construction of treatment centres, you created a backlog that saw patients having to seek treatment in the US, and now your solution is to fund a private, for-profit scheme that offers volume incentive bonuses, bonuses based not on the quality of care given but solely on the number of patients who are seen. This is like piecework. It's like treating patients like widgets in a factory. It's saying that production based on increased profits is the bottom line. It is unacceptable.

You have refused to give us a copy of your so-called private contract. What I want to ask you today is, will you give us a copy of the funding agreement entered into between your government and Cancer Care Ontario?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I would like to correct a misunderstanding, perhaps, of what I said yesterday, which was that we would co-operate fully. If there is a value-for-money audit, which was the original question that was posed at a legislative committee on this very matter, we would co-operate fully with a value-for-money audit. If there is information any honourable members wish to see as part of an overall audit, we would co-operate fully with that. So we're certainly willing to co-operate with any information they would like to see available.

The fact of the matter is that on the public policy issue, however, maybe she and I do disagree, because

when looking for lower cost, better quality-of-life alternatives for cancer care patients, we're on the side of third-party delivery at Sunnybrook—better as an alternative to their flying to Buffalo or Cleveland or Detroit. If she and I disagree on that, so be it. I think we're on the side of a made-in-Ontario solution for quality cancer care here in Ontario.

**Ms Lankin:** But you see, Minister, your solution is worse than one that would be delivered in the public sector, with public dollars, public administration, and without a profit motive that treats patients like widgets in a factory. While it may be better than Buffalo, it's worse than a made-in-Ontario, public sector solution, and it fits your government's ideology quite clearly.

Tell me how you have accountability and transparency when you're going to hide everything behind so-called private contracts. You have an accountability here in this House. Are you telling me today that you won't provide us with the details of your funding agreement with Cancer Care Ontario? I'm asking you, are you bonusing based on volume incentive? The public has a right to now. They have a right to transparency, to know what you've funded, what the profit incentives are, what the quality-of-treatment incentives, if any, are, and you have denied us access to that information.

I'm going to ask you again: was your rhetoric in the throne speech about accountability a sham or are you going to be accountable and transparent? Will you provide us with a copy of the contract between Cancer Care Ontario and the private company, and your funding agreement between your ministry and Cancer Care Ontario?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Again, I would be happy to state for the record that we would comply fully and without hesitation with any value-for-money audit. If the Provincial Auditor wishes to get involved, that is fine by us.

The fact of the matter is that the honourable member is suggesting there was a choice to extend the care and the providers of the care under the current framework. That's not my understanding. My understanding is that when you looked into the labour contracts and union agreements, that was far in excess more expensive than the alternative that has been provided by this contract. If the honourable member has other information, I'd like to see it.

We are here to provide the most comprehensive, quality cancer care for the most people in Ontario. I am not going to apologize for looking outside of the box, for looking at private sector providers if they can do it better for less within universal accessibility, which is what this contract does.

1530

### NANTICOKE GENERATING STATION

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, your government is the owner of the largest single source of air pollution in all of Canada. The Nanticoke coal-



fired plant is the largest coal-fired plant in North America. Nanticoke is Ontario's largest source of nitrogen oxide emissions. You know that contributes to smog and acid rain. Nanticoke is Ontario's largest source of carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global warming and climate change. Nanticoke is southern Ontario's largest source of sulphur dioxide, which contributes to smog and acid rain. Nanticoke is Ontario's second-largest source of mercury emissions. That's a potent neurotoxin, as you would know. Nanticoke emits six cancer-causing substances, including arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, lead and nickel, and Nanticoke's coal-fired emissions more than doubled between 1995 and 1999.

Minister, you have a chance to make a bold move, a bold stroke in favour of the environment. Will you today assure members of this House that you will convert this dirty coal-fired plant, the largest single source of air pollution in all of Canada, to natural gas and eliminate so many of these contaminants that are causing great damage to the health of the people of Ontario?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** The member has indicated that we have a chance. Well, I would like to indicate to the member that his party had a chance, and the NDP had a chance as well.

Our government is following through on our commitment to ensure that we improve air quality in the province of Ontario. We have completed a review of our coal-fired plants and we have taken a very significant step. We have announced that we will be demanding, as of April 2005, that Lakeview no longer be in a position that it can burn coal and that it must convert. I can tell you, that announcement has been well received by people in the province of Ontario, particularly people in the Toronto area.

**Mr Bradley:** The minister avoided the question. I should say to her that I don't know whether it worked in health or whether it's going to work any more anywhere else, but you know, you have to deal with the problems that are here today.

We have a situation—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** Let me set the position, because I think the Minister of Municipal Affairs is very interested in this. As a result of the deregulation, of the wide-open market that you're going to have in terms of production of electricity, there's going to be a stoking up of the dirty coal-fired plants in the province of Ontario. If you sell it to the Americans, they'll have it going full blast.

Your plan calls for only two changes to two of the units to reduce some of the contaminants. You can take a very bold step, because remember, the Ontario Medical Association says this costs \$9.9 billion a year in health care and other costs and contributes to 1,900 premature deaths in Ontario.

Minister, will you not admit that the best thing that you can do with the Nanticoke station, the largest coal-fired plant in North America, the largest single source of air pollution, is to require its conversion to natural gas?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Our government will be following through and has been following through with initiatives in order to ensure that we improve air quality in this province. I would just remind the member opposite, they had a chance and so did the NDP.

In fact, I'd like to read about the response to the announcement on Lakeview. This is from Jack Gibbons of the Ontario Clean Air Alliance: "This is a tremendous victory for public health, since Lakeview is the single largest source of air pollution in the GTA." He said, "This is a step forward. They're finally doing something...."

Ann Mulvale congratulates us for taking this important step in improving air quality in Ontario.

I would share with you the other steps that we've taken. Not only have we announced the closure of Lakeview, we have announced tough new emission caps for all the coal and oil generating—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the Minister's time is up. New question.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Constituents in my riding are asking me about the provincial government's plans for the \$104-million federal safety net payment which it announced. This is important to me, as it is to all other rural members in this House. The federal Liberal MPs are saying that our government has been holding up the transfer of these dollars to Ontario farmers. My question to the minister is whether he can tell us whether or not these allegations that are being made by the federal Liberals are true.

**Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I thank the member for the question. I find it difficult to understand why some of the federal MPs have difficulty with this. The \$104 million that the federal government provided to help distressed farmers was certainly not adequate, but they had put a condition on it that we'd work with our stakeholders and then advise them on how that money is to be distributed. I sent that letter off to the Minister of Agriculture on April 17 to suggest to him how that money should be distributed. As soon as the federal government gives us the OK, that money will flow.

If the federal members have a problem, they should call the federal Minister of Agriculture. Hopefully he will be able to give them the right information.

**Mr Tilson:** I have a question with respect to the \$90-million one-time payment made to the grain and oilseed producers. I believe that our government is continuing to support farmers, when it's evident the federal government is not doing its job.

I ask the minister if he could clarify for me the issues surrounding the provincial government's \$90-million one-time payment made to the grain and oilseed producers. It seems the federal MPs in my area, and specifically in my riding, are advising our constituents that

this payment is not \$20 million more than what was committed. In fact, they're simply saying it's old money. For clarification, can you tell this House about the \$90-million payment given by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to the farmers of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Coburn:** I thank the member for the opportunity to explain the \$90 million. Traditionally, the arrangement between the federal government and the provincial government has been a 60-40 split on some of these payments. Our government recognized the serious situation farmers were in and went beyond that in this particular case and provided \$90 million. Under the 40-60 split, it would have been \$70 million, so we went beyond it. That was new money, not old money.

The amount the federal government had committed to agriculture in this country, \$500 million, fell \$400 million short of what farmers needed. We saw fit to recognize that situation with the farmers, and I'm quite proud to say that our government recognized that and gave the additional money.

### TAXATION

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Finance. I'll start by congratulating him on his appointment.

My question is relatively straightforward. It has to do with the status of the tax cuts. Two years ago, as the minister will know, you announced a 20% cut in personal income tax, and the last two budgets have included cuts in that. You've announced that the budget in two weeks will finish the 20% tax cut, that it will complete it. What per cent of the 20% cut has already been announced and implemented and what per cent of the 20% cut still needs to be announced in the upcoming budget?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** We are on track with respect to the commitments that were made in the Blueprint that over time we would reduce taxes by 20%, \$4 billion. I can assure the member opposite that this is on track. We are continuing our pre-budget consultations, of course. I've met now, I'm told, with more than 350 people, discussing tax issues in Ontario. That's still a work in progress, and I'll look forward on May 9 to announcing further tax cuts in this chamber.

**Mr Phillips:** This isn't a difficult question. You made the promise. You said we would cut it 20%. The people of Ontario are entitled to an answer. How much have you cut already? We've asked this question, by the way, of your staff and they refuse to answer it. You've made the announcements. You made the promise. It's a very simple, straightforward question that you deserve to answer on behalf of the people of Ontario.

Nothing could be simpler. You've made the promise, you've made the commitments. It's very simple. You promised the 20%. What percentage have you already implemented and what percentage is still to go? Nothing could be simpler for a Minister of Finance than to tell the people of Ontario what you've already done in clear,

unequivocal terms. Can we have that simple little answer right now, Minister of Finance?

**1540**

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** I do thank the member. I look forward, as I've indicated in my previous answer, to reporting to the House with respect to the status of our tax reductions, the status of the tax cuts over the course of the past several years when the budget is announced on May 9, when I have an opportunity to present in this place the complete fiscal picture of the province of Ontario at that time.

Virtually all forecasters in Ontario congratulate this government on the fact that we have reduced taxes, which clearly is a stimulus to the economy in the province of Ontario. We intend to keep our commitments with respect to the tax cuts and I'll have all the figures for my friend opposite—not just some—but all of them, on the 9th day of May.

### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Since we arrived here at Queen's Park, I think each and every one of us reads about the issues and the programs daily that affect us here and affect this great province of ours. One issue that I've read about lately, and not just lately but in the last couple of years, is the difficulty that employers are having finding the skilled workers that they need to run their businesses successfully. This is particularly important in my riding of Kitchener, where I hear of the challenges that employers face daily.

Minister, I know that this is an area in which our government has been actively working, and that's for the last couple of years, since 1998. I wonder if you could report on what our government has done to assist in training more skilled workers here in Ontario.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for the question. The member is quite right. The government has been involved in helping train skilled workers.

In 1998, under the leadership of the late Al Palladini, our government developed a strategic skills investment program, which grants funding to specific skills training programs across the province. The skills investment program has been a great success. So far we have invested \$54 million in 34 different training projects across the province and our investments have been matched with \$156 million from education and business partners for a total of \$210 million invested in the skills employers need most to keep our economy growing.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Thank you, Minister, but what you've explained is what we've done up to this point and I agree it's been helpful, but I have to ask what are we going to do next? I speak to John Tibbits at Conestoga College, I speak to Klaus Woerner of ATS, I speak to members at Research in Motion and other businesses in



our area and I hear over and over again that we have a shortage of skilled workers.

Businesses are struggling to find workers with the skills that they need to make it in today's competitive world. You told us what you have already done. I want to know what we're going to do in the future. What else can Ontarians look forward to from this government in the area of skills training?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The program was very successful in 1998, so much so that in the 1999 budget the Minister of Finance announced the program would be extended to a \$100-million multiyear project. I'm pleased to say that our government has \$76 million to invest in the program over the next few years.

Applications to the program are on the rise and the projects themselves are becoming larger, more innovative and more complex. The call for proposals is located on the ministry's Web site and will be there through 2005-06.

The strategic skills investment program is one of the tools our government is using to build the skilled workforce that is one of our great strengths in attracting and keeping investment here in Ontario.

#### NORTHERN MEDICAL SCHOOL

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** My question is for the Minister of Health and it's regarding your brief, very vague reference to a made-in-northern-Ontario medical school using the latest in e-learning technology. Will this be an independent, stand-alone facility, will there be a campus or campuses, or will it be just another exercise in distance education, and how many spaces will be set aside for students from northern Ontario in this new school?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Can I encourage—and I mean no disrespect—the honourable member not to be so cynical that this would be some sort of fluffery of some sort of distance education. Nothing could be further from the truth. Clearly there has to be a physical, bricks-and-mortar presence in northern Ontario on a site or sites.

But my vision and our Premier's vision is: let's use the best of e-learning so that this is a national and international centre of advanced learning, second to none perhaps in the world. So this builds on the bricks and mortar, builds on the site or sites that have to be there. I encourage the honourable member to think beyond the boundaries in that respect when it comes to the students themselves. This is replying to the need that we all recognize on all sides of the House for medically educated doctors to be in the community, and that's what we're going to be responding to.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 37(a), I have submitted the correct paperwork for requesting a

late show with the Minister of Health and my dissatisfaction with his answer to the question regarding Cancer Care Ontario and the non-tendering of a project.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I was just going to announce that; you beat me to it. You've obviously filed the paperwork correctly, because there it is.

#### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we begin the petitions, I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming our group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 37th Parliament. They are: Jason Apostolopoulos from Thornhill, Annette Carrier from Timmins-James Bay, Alison Chapman from Oakville, Brendan Clark from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, Andrew Clarke from Waterloo-Wellington, Shan Cooper from Huron-Bruce, Kristen Duimering from Kitchener-Waterloo, Dominic Fok from Willowdale, Laura Fountain from Simcoe North, Melissa Gallant from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, Bethany Joesse from Oxford, Leonard Loewith from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot, Theresa Robertson from Whitby-Ajax, Matthew Shalhoub from Windsor-St Clair, Darren Smith from Mississauga South, John Trickett from Durham, Mark Ungar from Parkdale-High Park, Kate VanBuskirk from Brampton West-Mississauga, Peter Wanyenya from Toronto Centre-Rosedale and Tara Warder from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Would all the members please join in welcoming our pages.

Notwithstanding the announcement by the member, I apparently do have to announce it, so pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Windsor West has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Health concerning health and cancer care. This matter will be debated upon adjournment today.

#### PETITIONS

##### SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the American Sign Language/English interpreter training program at Cambrian College is both the only program of its kind in northern Ontario and an extremely valuable resource for training people to work and assist our deaf community; and

"Whereas students from this program make an important contribution to the medical, legal, educational and mental health systems by providing vital communication services; and

"Whereas there is a massive shortage of interpreters in the region to accommodate the needs of the community,

resulting in long waiting periods for people requiring interpreters; and

"Whereas insufficient funding of the American Sign Language/English interpreter program at Cambrian College threatens to destroy this program, and to deprive many in Ontario of these important interpreter services and of equal access;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commit to increasing funding to the American Sign Language/English interpreters program at Cambrian College in order to allow this vital program to survive."

I'd like to thank Sadie Marr, who garnered 680 signatures to this petition. I affix my signature because I'm in complete agreement with it.

1550

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I've got a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has cut funding for regulated child care spaces in Ontario by 15% between 1995 and 1998;

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has yet to implement the recommendations of its own commissioned Early Years report by Dr Fraser Mustard to create a seamless, integrated early years education system;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million over the next five years from the federal government for early years development projects;

"Whereas the Conservative government lags behind other provinces in announcing its plans for the \$844 million in federal money for early years development; and

"Whereas other provinces are implementing innovative, affordable and accessible child care programs, such as Quebec's \$5-a-day child care program and BC's \$7-a-day child care expansion;

"Whereas the need for affordable, accessible, regulated child care and family resources continues to grow in Ontario;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Harris government immediately match and earmark a significant portion of the \$844 million from the federal government for expanded regulated child care spaces."

That's signed by Jeannette Denchfield of Welland, Graham Wykes of Welland and hundreds of other people from Niagara region and beyond.

#### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I have a petition signed by over 300 good citizens of Cambridge addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas on September 27, 1997, Cambridge was legally designated underserved, having an insufficient number of family doctors for its citizens; and

"Whereas thousands of men, women and children in Cambridge are not cared for by their own family physician and this unfortunate situation exists in other Ontario communities;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government substantially increase the number of family doctors in Cambridge and other underserved areas by:

"1. Permitting substantial numbers of qualified and highly competent foreign-trained family doctors the right to practise in Cambridge and other underserved areas in Ontario; and

"2. Substantially increase the number of available student spaces in Ontario medical schools and require new graduates to serve in Cambridge and other underserved areas in Ontario."

I proudly attach my name thereto.

#### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario plans to build a new high school in Cornwall to provide accommodations for 300 students at the taxpayers' cost of over \$9 million;

"Whereas the Upper Canada District School Board currently has 700 excess pupil spaces in the high school level in Cornwall and is looking at filling these spaces with grade 7 and 8 students, necessitating an elementary school closure;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Please urge these coterminous boards to share the facilities that exist. Due to a previous collaboration effort these boards presently share space in one high school. This has been a harmonious, cost-effective union. We request that the government of Ontario urge the continued co-operation of these boards to avoid unnecessary spending of tax dollars. Without this co-operation we face sending our young children into high schools at an early age simply to fill space."

This petition was signed by 1,600 of the constituents in my area, and I also affix my signature.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place



to place and have failed to protect from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

It's my pleasure to attach my name to it.

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** This is a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

"Whereas the provincial government has implemented an alarmingly high number of changes to our education system;

"Whereas these changes were both sudden and severe, affecting the quality of our education system in a negative way;

"Whereas the provincial government claims to have implemented these changes to benefit students;

"We, the undersigned students of Toronto, call upon the provincial government:

"(1) to consult with students on the impact of massive changes to our secondary schools before enacting new laws;

"(2) to respect teachers by acknowledging the work they do outside the classroom; and

"(3) to stop making one-size-fits-all laws that decimate our school life."

I am happy to affix my signature to this petition, which is signed by students from Parkdale Collegiate, Western Technical, Humberside and many other schools in the Toronto area.

### MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** "Whereas the current level of magnetic resonance imaging services in the Ottawa area is the lowest of any major urban area in the province and waiting lists for those services exceed 7,000 patients and seven months;

"Whereas the delays experienced by patients waiting for these services are potentially harmful to their health and often result in the mental anguish of uncertainty, needless suffering and financial burden;

"Whereas Ottawa area hospitals have submitted proposals for increased MRI services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health be directed to take immediate action and provide sufficient funding to resolve the alarming backlog of patients waiting for MRI scans at Ottawa hospitals."

I have over 200 signatures and I would like to add my name to the petition.

### VETERINARY SERVICES

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the North Hastings community of Bancroft and the surrounding area is a predominantly rural geographic area that faces many of the same challenges that northern communities contend with," and in that "live-stock plays a significant part in that economy; and

"Whereas the community is experiencing a crisis due to the fact that their veterinarian for large animals has indicated he can no longer provide services to the Bancroft area, and there are no immediate alternatives for animal care within their geographic area; and

"Whereas the only known incentive program for veterinarians is funded through the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines "and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to work together to find a solution to this immediate crisis. We call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce measures that would create incentives for veterinarians to practise within the described northern and rural communities in order to abate this emergency situation and to prevent similar crises in the future."

I happily sign my name to this petition.

### GARDERIES D'ENFANTS

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** J'ai une pétition ici qui contient plus de 200 noms provenant de parents de jeunes familles de la région de Casselman. Cette pétition est accompagnée d'une lettre depuis le maire de Casselman, M. Marcel Lévesque.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que la garde d'enfants en résidence privée comprise dans la Loi sur les garderies définit la garde temporaire, moyennant rémunération ou avantage quelconque, de cinq enfants au plus âgés de moins de 10 ans ;

« Attendu que dans les régions rurales, il y a un manque et en grande partie l'absence de transport en commun, et étant donné que la population est majoritairement éloignée des centres et des écoles ;

« Nous, les soussignés, présentons la pétition suivante à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Que le gouvernement de l'Ontario apporte la modification suivante sur la définition de la garde d'enfants en résidence privée comprise dans la Loi sur les garderies, permettant un nombre plus élevé de cinq enfants de moins de 10 ans dans les régions rurales. »

J'appuie cette pétition.

1600

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Pursuant to standing order 30(b), I'm now required to call orders of the day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** Let me begin, Mr Speaker, by telling you how good it is to see you again. We on this side of the House would like to see you much more often. We happen to believe that this Legislature is an important place. We believe that it is in fact the people's place, the place where the people's work gets done.

We don't agree with some of the members opposite who seem to think this is just some sort of temporary layover between trips to Florida. And we don't agree with some of the members opposite who seem to think this is some sort of snack bar at the turn, where you drop in occasionally between the 9th and 10th holes.

We happen to believe that this is the place to be, that this is the people's place and this is where the people's work gets done. On that note, we are very happy indeed to be back.

As for the throne speech, it was interesting to watch the government lurch from buzzword to buzzword, the latest, of course, being "accountability." I want to tell you that we on this side of the House believe that we are all accountable to the working families of Ontario. I want you to contrast this with members of the government. We don't believe that we are accountable to the well connected or to the wealthy few or to the government's special interests, such as their developer friends or their friends in private health care. We are accountable simply to working families, the people who pay the bills, both theirs and, frankly, ours; the people who work hard day in and day out just to make ends meet, the people who strive every day to make their children's lives and our communities in this province better. We feel accountable to those people.

You see, we understand that when our families succeed, our province succeeds. We know our families aren't looking to government to solve all their problems, but they are looking to us to help them with those challenges that are simply too big for them to tackle on their own.

I understand what families are facing today. My own family faces many of the same challenges. Terri and I have four children: Carlene, who is working her way through university, and our sons, Jamie, Liam and Connor, who seem to be eating their way through high school. At home we refer to the fridge as the black hole, because anything that goes in there disappears forever.

But all kidding aside, for Terri and I there is nothing more important than our kids. I spend far too much time away from my family, but I do it because I believe in what I'm doing and what I'm fighting for and who I'm fighting for. I think that what I'm doing will help my

family and families just like ours right across the province. So while my job may not be typical, I think my family is.

Like other families, we worry about saving for the kids' education. Terri and I were told a couple of weeks ago that we could be looking at as much as \$200,000 to put four kids through university. At the same time, of course, we're trying to put away enough to ensure that the kids won't have to support us as we grow older. And we spend some time thinking about health care, but especially from our parents' perspective, because they're getting on in years and they will have a greater call upon our health care system.

We look at our natural environment and we want to know that our children and grandchildren will have clean air and clean drinking water, let alone wilderness areas to enjoy. I can remember when the kids were growing up we went out of our way to lock up all the household toxics, whether you're talking about shoe polish or pills. I think parents right across the province make that effort in their homes, but they also expect that the government will take responsibility for those toxics over which we as families have very little control.

I've got to tell you that mostly in my family we just scramble. We lead busy, hectic, just-in-time lives. There are bills to pay, schedules to juggle, taxi service to provide to this one or that one. We've got to stay on top of the kids' homework. Terri's got her own assignments to mark and classes to prepare. The kids have all got part-time jobs. They want to make sure they're putting enough money away for college and university. We want them to be home at a reasonable time on weekends, and so on and so on. Don't get me wrong. It's a wonderful life. We feel blessed, but it's hectic and it can be very stressful at times.

Families need help from government with the big things, things they need to be able to count on. When we drop our kids off at school in the morning, we want to know that our children are getting the best possible education. But in Ontario today, sadly, kids are learning in cramped classrooms with stressed-out teachers in an atmosphere that's been poisoned by this government's brand of politics. That's why we've put forward a plan to help our families by improving education. It starts with a real cap on class sizes in the early grades. No class in junior kindergarten through grade 3 will have more than 20 students.

This government is satisfied with an average class size of 25, and what that means in real terms is that today in Ontario there are over 500,000 children in classes of 26 or more and there are 90,000 children in classes of 31 or more.

We think that our real cap of 20 makes good sense. These early years provide the foundation for learning throughout life. Research tells us that children in smaller classes are better behaved, they do better in school and they are more likely to get into college or university.

We'd like to lower class sizes in every grade, but, like a family, we want to be prudent with our finances. The



cost of this cap on class sizes is one tenth of what the government has already earmarked for additional tax cuts. Let's place this in some reasonable perspective. That's what we're calling for at the end of the day. It's not an issue here—and the government would colour it another way but I want to be very clear: it's not an issue for us as to whether or not we should take all of the surplus monies today and put them into a tax cut, or take all of the surplus monies and put them into program spending, into investments. It's a matter of balance. This government has an unhealthy obsession with taking virtually all extra monies available and putting them into tax cuts, the majority of which help those who need help the least.

We think it makes sense to take one dime out of every dollar earmarked for tax cuts for the wealthy few and large corporations and use it to cut class sizes. That's something that will help, in a real way, our working families, and that will secure our future. We'll be most competitive over the long run if we have a highly educated, highly skilled workforce.

We've just completed an interesting exercise in my hometown of Ottawa. We like to take pride in some of our high-tech successes there. We're going through this branding exercise and trying to figure out the best way to market ourselves to the world at large.

1610

The people involved in this project sought the opinions of people in the international high-tech community. The questions we had for these potential investors were, "What are you looking for? What is it going to take to attract you into our community? What foundation do you have to find in order to establish yourselves here or to expand your existing base here?" Do you know what the number one answer was? They want a highly skilled and educated workforce. That's what they're looking for.

If the government understood nothing else in terms of the ideas we are putting forward, I wish in all sincerity they would understand this, that given who we are here in Ontario, at this stage in our history, it's important that we play to our natural advantages and the future is to be found in developing here in our province a highly skilled and educated workforce.

Everybody's looking for an edge, we understand. It's a highly competitive global economy. We're all looking for an advantage. We all need to hone an edge. Our edge is a highly skilled and educated workforce and the way we get there is through education. That's why our party remains so committed to making sure we offer our children, our young people and all of those adults who want to pursue lifelong learning every good opportunity to improve themselves by providing high-quality education. That's what it's all about.

We've got other strong ideas for education. We believe in public school choice. We believe parents should be able to choose the best school for their child, even if it's not in their neighbourhood. We want to bring lighthouse schools to Ontario. If a school is successful in

one way or another—it might be that one school has made exceptional headway when it comes to parental involvement. It might be that a school's got an outstanding anti-bullying program. It might be that another school has made exceptional advances when it comes to academic achievement. It doesn't matter how they are excelling, if a school is successful, it should receive additional funding and it will under our plan, so that it can be used to share its best practices with other schools so that the entire system is lifted up.

Something else we would do is introduce turnaround teams to Ontario schools. If a school is failing on a consistent basis, if a school is struggling, we would send in turnaround teams, teams of experts that will make the necessary changes by offering expert advice and assistance and guidance. We won't write off any of our schools, because to do so would be to fail our children.

The government has signalled a willingness to implement some of our ideas. That's encouraging to a point. What's worrisome is that the government is shying away from those ideas that require an investment in education. For instance, it has not adopted our real cap on class sizes. The question of course is, why? I'll tell you. This government still sees education as an expense, when our families understand in their heart of hearts it is an investment. We know in our families of all the things we might spend money on, nothing is of greater value to us than investing in our children, in our future and, from a provincial scale, in a prosperity that lasts.

We've got to ask ourselves how we can provide our families with the best education in the world when the government can't even find a way to provide something as basic as soccer after school. Again in the throne speech and for the umpteenth time, the government promised to do something about that.

Gerard Kennedy and I put forward a peace plan. We did that on behalf of our caucus. We worked long and hard on coming up with some kind of a responsible solution that would reconcile differences between the government and teachers and put the interests of our students first. We came up with a solution. This government dismissed it out of hand.

The government had its own task force look at the matter. That task force came up with an alternative solution. Again this government dismissed it out of hand.

The Minister of Education and the Premier will cry crocodile tears for our students, but real action on behalf of families is nowhere to be seen.

I can tell you, and I say this with a great deal of pride, if the government fails to deliver real action on behalf of working families, I've got a team of delivery men and women right here beside me ready to go. There is always room for others, I say to the members opposite.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** And they're all here today.

**Mr McGuinty:** Margaret, you look good in red. Come on over here.

Throughout this session, we will be urging the government to do what's best for Ontario's working families. In

education, this means we will be urging the government to put peace in our schools ahead of politics, and the interests of our kids ahead of ideology. When you take a look at what's happened to public education in Ontario during the past six years, our kids have suffered enough. It's time for this government to admit that and mend its ways.

I can tell you that working families are also looking to us to prove that we share with them an unwavering commitment to public health care. They want quality care, not just a bed but caring, professional, hands-on care. I feel very strongly about this in a very personal way. My mother worked as a nurse for many years, most of it in a children's hospital, as if she didn't have enough on her plate with 10 kids to care for.

Inspired by her example, four of us kids worked in hospitals at one time or another. After high school, I took a year off myself and I worked in the National Defence Medical Centre in Ottawa. I had some very basic, hands-on responsibilities for World War I and World War II veterans. My job was to bathe these men, shave these men, brush their teeth, brush their hair, give them back rubs, turn them from side to side so they wouldn't develop bedsores, treat the bedsores and talk to them. They didn't want to talk about the war. They just wanted to talk. I loved that job. I learned a heck of a lot about human dignity and the value of quality care.

At the beginning of the 21st century, we've been very ingenious in terms of the kinds of technology that we've introduced into the delivery of health care. But I've got to tell you, there are no two instruments more important in health care than human hands, no better way to give expression to our collective care and compassion for our sick, for the members of our families, than through our hands. The problem is that today's nurses are so busy running around and filling out charts, trying to get from bed to bed, they don't have time to provide that kind of care.

1620

We now have the fewest nurses per capita in the country. The government sent thousands of them packing. Now it's begging them to come back and it's no wonder that so many of them refuse to return.

We put forward a plan to turn around health care. It's a plan to give families peace of mind. It starts with what I call 24-7 health care. We believe that doctors should work in teams, together with other doctors and nurse practitioners and nurses, and be available to their patients on a 24-7 basis.

If you have a child running a high fever and it's 2 o'clock in the morning and it's snowing outside, the notion that you've got to physically remove them from their bed and their home, put them in a car and take them to an emergency ward should be as antiquated as bankers' hours. We've got to do better for Ontario's working families.

We know that 24-7 will serve our families well, even though it will be fought by the government's friends, the special interests in the health care field who want to

profit from the crisis in confidence by dismantling medicare. The government is clearly on their side, not the side of working families. That's why it's threatening working families with two-tier health care: a Cadillac system for the government's wealthy friends and supporters who can afford private care, and for the rest of us user fees, extra billing and still longer waits.

In the throne speech, the government claims that the federal commission studying the future of medicare has a mandate that is simply too narrow. Well, the one thing that is not on the table is one-tier, universally accessible, publicly funded health care. The government clearly wants a health care system that is not universally accessible or is not publicly funded.

Of course, the Premier and the Minister of Health try to dance around this, doing their now familiar two-tier two-step: step 1, you float the idea; step 2, you deny that you've floated the idea. Well, here is step 3: We on this side of the House will fight every single day to protect universally accessible, publicly funded health care for every Ontarian. We're telling working families, "It doesn't matter to us that you're not well off and that you're not well connected. You can count on us to protect your health care."

Working families know that medicare is the difference between disease and despair. Working families know that medicare is the difference between falling ill and tumbling into poverty simply because you are ill. We on this side of the House will fight for our working families.

I know that some of the members opposite are having difficulty with our commitment to Ontario's working families. I know that some of them are great supporters of two-tier health care. Some of them even campaigned for it in the last federal election. But we on this side of the House believe in medicare for all and we want to save medicare by reforming medicare.

The importance of that really hit home for me three or four years ago. Terri and I finally succumbed to the Disney World advertising. We couldn't resist it any more, so we went south. At one particular point in time Carlene was running around a wooden pool deck and there was more than a sliver, really a shard, of wood sticking upwards like this. Carlene was running around this wooden deck and unfortunately she drove this one-and-a-half-inch piece of wood deep into her foot. Terri was frantic and she signalled for me to come over. I did, and I looked. I couldn't see a darned thing, except the fact that Carleen was in serious pain.

So we grabbed a cab; we headed to the nearest doctor's office in Florida. Carlene was in tears, Terri was at her wit's end and it was a bad scene. Speaker, you will know this: you haven't really experienced life to the max until you've had a child in distress and you're trying to figure out what to do.

So we went to the doctor's office, got the doctor, and I had the insurance forms. I said, "Here, Doc. Here are the insurance forms." I'll never forget what he said to me. He looked me straight in the eye. Terri was there, frantic, in tears, my daughter beside her in tears. The doctor said,



"If you want me to look after your daughter, it'll be cash, traveller's cheques or credit card. That's how we work here." That's what he said to me. I can tell you, if we continue to drag our heels on health care reform, that will be how we work here, too.

So let's move ahead with 24-7 health care. Let's start to reform the system. I'm not saying that it's perfect, by any means. But let's understand that the foundation, the bedrock for our medicare system is universal accessibility and public funding. Beyond that there's ample room for improvement and reform and innovation, but we're not moving off our bedrock.

I can tell you that families are counting on us too to fight for the environment. This is not an abstract concept for our working families. I'm talking about the air that we breathe and the water that we drink. Any mom or dad will tell you that kids often have simple nightly request: "Can I have a glass of water?" That shouldn't be a difficult question for any Ontario parent to answer, but in Ontario today, families unfortunately have reason to think twice.

We've put forward a plan for safe drinking water. It calls for regular inspection of our water treatment facilities, strict enforcement of our laws, including a new one that we'd put on the books. We'd regulate the waste produced by our industrial-sized farms.

Government also has a role in defending our water supplies by protecting our communities from unfettered, unchecked, unbridled, reckless development. In this session, we will be once again urging the government to start protecting the Oak Ridges moraine. If the government wants to move beyond talk, if it really wants to protect the Oak Ridges moraine, all it has to do is pass Mike Colle's bill. It's ready to go. Water you can drink and communities you can live in have got to take precedence over industrial farms and well-connected developers.

Then there's the matter, sadly, of our air quality. My colleague Mr Bradley was putting a question earlier today to the Minister of the Environment and talking about how 1,900 people today die annually prematurely as a result of breathing bad air in Ontario. I'm not sure of how many of the members opposite understand that the single greatest cause for hospital admissions for Ontario children today is asthma. I'm not sure how many of the members opposite know that the single greatest cause for absenteeism in our elementary schools is asthma. The air is making our kids sick.

It's time that this government get its priorities straight, that it take responsibility for the natural environment and that it start by adopting our plan, referred to in the House today by my colleague. Why does it not proceed to convert all of our coal-fired plants to natural-gas-fired plants? That's good for our families and it's good for our future.

1630

When it comes to the province's finances, I believe we can serve families and learn from them at the same time. Most families frankly are smarter than most govern-

ments. Families invest in things that secure their future without spending money they just don't have. They put away money for the kids' education over taking care of themselves or their loved ones in their old age. I think we should do that too in a fiscally responsible way.

We on this side of the House believe in balanced budgets. In fact we believe in a balanced approach to budgeting. We're all for tax relief that benefits working families, but not across-the-board tax cuts that do the most to help those who need it the least.

Of the tax cuts announced so far by the current government, half of the money has gone to the wealthiest 20% of Ontarians. It's no wonder that most working families feel someone else has benefited from the Mike Harris tax cuts. Families want and deserve tax cuts, but they want tax cuts that are fair and they know that we need more than just tax cuts, that we need a plan for the long term, one that also invests in education, health care and the environment. This balanced approach, one that puts the interests of our families ahead of politics and ahead of ideology, is the one Ontario Liberals believe in and embrace.

This balanced approach is one that makes for prosperity that lasts. A highly educated, highly skilled workforce, excellent health care, safe and liveable communities—these are the things that really attract jobs and investment. This balanced approach has been missing in Ontario. Think of this now: during six years of tremendous economic growth, the government poured money into tax cuts for their special interests, the large corporations and the wealthy few. At the same time they failed to invest in education or health care or the environment. They failed to put money aside for a rainy day. They failed to protect Ontario's working families or to copy the real common sense that families apply to their own budgeting.

Now the government wants to continue to cut taxes for their special interests, while announcing more cuts to education and still more cuts to health care. They continue to put politics and ideology ahead of the interests of Ontario's working families. They continue to believe in the quick fix of across-the-board tax cuts, cuts that do the most to help those who need it the least. It's a quick fix that really amounts to a foundation of quicksand for our economy.

So I say again, why can't we take just one dime out of each dollar pledged to future tax cuts for the well-off? We could reduce class sizes for our kids and do something that's good, not only for our children but for our families and our future.

It's really quite a sad state of affairs when a government is too old to change its ways, too stubborn to learn from experience and too blinded by politics to do what's right for our families. I want to make this perfectly clear: we stand with Ontario families, families just like yours and mine. We don't stand with special interests or the wealthy few or the well-connected. We stand with Ontario families. It seems to me that's standing for something very important indeed.

When we fight for smaller class sizes, universal access to quality health care and safe drinking water, we are fighting for our families. When we fight for livable communities, for prosperity that lasts, we are fighting for our families. When we are fighting for our families, we are fighting for Ontario's future.

In this session and beyond this session, we will continue to fight for Ontario's families. In this place and beyond these four walls, we will continue to fight for Ontario's families. This is what drives me. It's what drives my caucus colleagues. Our only special interest is working families. Our only goal is to provide them with the things they need to succeed: good schools, quality health care, clean air and water, prosperity that lasts. These are things that are worth fighting for, because when our families succeed, our province succeeds, and when our province succeeds, we all succeed.

I've got to tell you, it is great to be back, because we've got a lot to fight for.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Further debate?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** I'd like to move adjournment of the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Ms Lankin has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The quandary is that we have a request for a late show. The standing orders are slightly problematic in this area. One of the standing orders requires that this happen at 6 o'clock, and one of them says following adjournment. The problem I'm having is just trying to sort this out. If we had unanimous consent, we could have the late show on another day, or we could have the late show right now. I'm looking for a little bit of direction from a House leader or—

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This may be of assistance. I am prepared to move it to Thursday, as is being requested, if I may have some guarantee that the Minister of Health will actually be in the House on Thursday at the end of the day.

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Speaker, the Minister of Health is not here but, on his behalf, I'm sure that he would relish the opportunity—one of his expressions—to debate this matter on Thursday.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will put the question: Do we have unanimous consent to have the late show on Thursday at 6 o'clock? Agreed? No.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** If they're saying it has to be the minister, I cannot commit to his schedule. Mr Speaker, I don't want to mislead the House. I can say that he would relish the opportunity to go through the normal process, where they've requested the late show to be on Thursday as opposed to today.

**Mrs Pupatello:** On a point of order, Speaker: If I may be of further assistance, I'm prepared to have the Premier in the House in the Minister of Health's absence for the late show on Thursday.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** On a point of order, Speaker: In light of the fact that the government seems to be in total disarray over this issue, I would seriously request that we at this time move the standing orders to a special committee of the Legislature so they can be studied and improvements can be made to that immediately.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** In light of the fact that the opposition didn't want to debate further or add comments to their leader's discussion and wanted to wrap up early, we will comply with the rules to have the late show today.

**Mrs Pupatello:** My understanding is that the Minister of Health is on his way and will be here in two to three minutes. I'm very prepared to wait for the minister.

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** Mr Speaker, that was going to be my point, that if we could be patient under the circumstances, the minister will be here.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We will take a five-minute recess. Following the five-minute recess, we will have the late show. Is that agreed? Agreed.

*The House recessed from 1643 to 1649.*

## CANCER TREATMENT

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Windsor West has given her notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Health concerning cancer care. The member for Windsor West has five minutes.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** I am disappointed that the Minister of Health isn't here to address this concern. He seemed so intent on avoiding the answer to this question during question period today that perhaps the parliamentary assistant to the minister will be more forthcoming about the rationale behind the move by this government to hand over hard-earned taxpayers' dollars to a company that was simply created to take money from the Ontario government Ministry of Health, use all of assets of the already-started cancer clinics, use staff that currently work in the cancer clinics as part of Cancer Care Ontario and deliver service to cancer patients.

My question to the Minister of Health this afternoon was very simple. I asked him, how does this government rationalize turning over the delivery of health care to a private company when the Ministry of Health is continuing to fund it and having absolutely no public tendering process to select this particular company? I asked the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health today to address especially this part of the question: why is there no public tendering process to hand this service over to this particular private company?

We won't question the ethics involved. Apparently the minister says that no conflict-of-interest rules were broken. Maybe that's going to cause a rewrite of conflict-of-interest rules in Ontario.



On the one hand we see that the minister says, "We've got to get these patients off the backlog. We've got to clear up the backlog." I asked the minister today, if we could have done this, why didn't we do this a year ago when we were sending our patients to Detroit, Buffalo and everywhere else? Why did we wait to turn it over all of a sudden, with no public tendering process, to a company to deliver this service? Why would you not tender this?

When Dr Shumak, the CEO of Cancer Care Ontario, was asked this very same question, he said, "We didn't want to make a lot of noise about this. Why? Because we knew there was going to be public outrage." How absolutely ridiculous is an answer like that?

Secondly, this government is going to come out with some kind of announcement in the near future about accountability. We asked this government about accountability. We want to know why you would hand over funding from the Ministry of Health, with all of the other services that are being required today in this ministry, to one company. I've got 100 people who are prepared to line up. Not only are they going to get handed \$4 million in start-up money to start the business, but they are also using public assets. They are using the equipment that we own through the cancer clinics already. They are using our equipment.

And where are they finding the employees for this venture? They are our employees. These are people who during the day work for us to deliver health care service to cancer patients. So what is the \$4 million for? What is the start-up cost for? I've got 100 people tomorrow who are going to come to your door and say, "Give me \$4 million in start-up and we'll do the same thing." It's like a temp agency, for heaven's sake. They just move on in after hours and they move on out when they're through, and in come the rest of the people at Sunnybrook who work there during the day.

We find it just unbelievable that you would turn this kind of money over and, secondly, with no tendering process. How did you come to choose the company that was being headed by the then vice-president of Cancer Care Ontario itself, the very organization that's come up with this scheme to stop patients from going across the border? That vice-president is now running this private company, which has been handed over \$4 million in start-up costs. Who is answering for all of this?

I am asking the Minister of Health this very respectable question that deserves the dignity of a respectable answer. People across Ontario ought to know what you're doing with our money and who is going to be accountable for it. We know we can't even make a freedom-of-information request of Cancer Care Ontario, yet it is controlled enough by this government that this government approved start-up money for that private firm. This government knew that it was going this route. You could have taken that same money and any profit that would be earned by that private company and put it back into services to be delivered to cancer patients in the

name of radiation treatment or any other kind of treatment these cancer patients need.

Yes, we want to keep people from going across the border at all costs. Explain to me how you are going to rationalize handing money to a private company whose only *modus operandi* and purpose for being is return on investment. That's what you get when you work with a private company. They want to see where their money goes and they want more of it. I asked the Minister of Health this question today and we deserve an answer tonight.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** It's my pleasure to stand in place of the Minister of Health today and answer the question from the member opposite, a question that actually took in a lot of points.

One of the points she talked about was one they talked about today in the public accounts committee. When I sat on that committee, it was actually a Liberal Party member, Ms McLeod from Thunder Bay, who introduced a motion, after Cancer Care Ontario had appeared before the public accounts committee, to have the auditor do a value-for-money audit of Cancer Care Ontario's decision to contract cancer services to a private company. It was initially defeated, but I was a member of that committee who then allowed the reintroduction of the motion and in fact voted in favour of the motion. As the minister has said today, that committee has voted to ask the Provincial Auditor to go ahead and do a value-for-money audit of that decision by Cancer Care Ontario. I believe that the Premier has stated publicly that he thinks it's fine for the Provincial Auditor to do a value-for-money audit of that decision. The minister has said the same thing several times in the House today and, I believe, when he was asked yesterday.

Many times in the history of Ontario—I remember when Ms Caplan was the health minister for the Liberal Party opposite in the 1980s, there were often headlines in the papers about patients being sent to Michigan, Buffalo or other places for cancer treatment. Now we have Cancer Care Ontario, which works closely with the Ministry of Health but is an arm's-length agency, that oversees cancer care in Ontario. Cancer Care Ontario has on occasion sent people to Buffalo, Michigan and other places to get cancer services.

What's important to note here is that Cancer Care Ontario several years ago adopted a standard of four weeks from diagnosis to beginning of treatment. The reason Cancer Care Ontario, I believe, was before the public accounts committee was that the Provincial Auditor said that only 50% of patients are meeting the standard that Cancer Care Ontario set. It's because only 50% are getting treatment within four weeks that they're often sending our Ontario patients to Buffalo and Michigan.

What isn't widely known is that that's the most aggressive standard adopted in the world, to begin treatment within four weeks. It's actually an admirable standard for Cancer Care Ontario to adopt. We don't have enough technicians in the province, and for a

variety of other reasons we've been unable to get 100% of our patients, but we actually have a better record than just about any province in Canada. However, on occasion, as I have said, Cancer Care Ontario has taken the decision to send our patients to Buffalo, Michigan and I believe some other provinces to try to get services more quickly for Ontario patients.

Actually, that's a wonderful part of our publicly paid-for health system, that we go to those lengths to make sure our Ontario patients get that kind of service. However, Cancer Care Ontario has decided it would prefer not to continue to send if they have excess patients who can't get in to be seen in that four-week window, that if they continue to have patients they have to send, they would prefer to send them to a clinic in Ontario. As such, Cancer Care Ontario has decided to contract with a company here in Ontario to provide that service. That was, as I said, a decision made by Cancer Care Ontario and it is one the government has supported.

As I said before and as I said at the outset, the Premier, the Minister of Health and the Liberal Party of Ontario came in with a motion at the public accounts

committee. They asked at that committee for this decision by Cancer Care Ontario to go to the Provincial Auditor for a value-for-money audit.

**Mrs Pupatello:** It's called public tendering. Are you going to address that or not?

**Mr Maves:** The members on this side of the committee voted in favour of that motion and in favour of the Provincial Auditor doing an audit. The minister has supported that. He supported it again today in the Legislature.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Talk about public tendering.

**Mr Maves:** If the auditor goes forward and does that value-for-money audit, and if there's anything the member is concerned about on that point, I'm sure we'll be happy to hear from her again then.

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 1700.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Beaches-East York	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
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Une liste alphabétique des noms de députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

## CONTENTS

Tuesday 24 April 2001

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Let's Build a Bridge municipal tour</b>	
Mr McMeekin .....	69
<b>Clarington Business Exposition</b>	
Mr O'Toole .....	69
<b>Anniversary of Armenian genocide</b>	
Mr Caplan .....	69
<b>Hospital volunteers</b>	
Mr Dunlop .....	70
<b>Northern health services</b>	
Mr Bartolucci .....	70
<b>Municipal property taxes</b>	
Mr Christopherson .....	70
<b>Government spending</b>	
Mr Wettlaufer .....	70
<b>Algoma Steel Inc</b>	
Mr Brown .....	71
<b>Breast cancer</b>	
Mr Johnson .....	71

### MOTIONS

<b>Private members' public business</b>	
Mrs Ecker .....	71
Agreed to .....	72
<b>Committee membership</b>	
Mrs Ecker .....	72
Agreed to .....	72
<b>Publication of record of debate</b>	
Mrs Ecker .....	72
Mr Kormos .....	72
Mr Christopherson .....	73
Agreed to .....	73

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Future of health care</b>	
Mr Clement .....	73
Mrs Johns .....	75
Mrs Elliott .....	75
Mrs Pupatello .....	76
Mr Duncan .....	77
Mr Hampton .....	77

### ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Education labour disputes</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	80
Mrs Ecker .....	80, 83
Mr Hampton .....	83

### Family health care networks

Mr McGuinty .....	81
Mr Clement .....	81

### Hydro rates

Mr Hampton .....	82
Mr Wilson .....	82

### Cancer treatment

Mrs Pupatello .....	83
Mr Clement .....	83, 86
Ms Lankin .....	86

### Hospital funding

Mr Galt .....	84
Mr Clement .....	84

### Medical school admissions

Mr Duncan .....	84
Mr Clement .....	85

### Earth Week

Mr O'Toole .....	85
Mrs Witmer .....	85

### Nanticoke generating station

Mr Bradley .....	86
Mrs Witmer .....	87

### Assistance to farmers

Mr Tilson .....	87
Mr Coburn .....	87

### Taxation

Mr Phillips .....	88
Mr Flaherty .....	88

### Skills development

Mr Wettlaufer .....	88
Mr Runciman .....	88

### Northern medical school

Mr Martin .....	89
Mr Clement .....	89

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Mr McGuinty .....	92
Debate adjourned .....	96

### OTHER BUSINESS

#### Visitor

The Speaker .....	71
-------------------	----

#### Integrity Commissioner

Mr Ramsay .....	78
Mr Kormos .....	78
Mrs Ecker .....	79
Mr Duncan .....	79
The Speaker .....	80

#### Notice of dissatisfaction

Mrs Pupatello .....	89
---------------------	----

#### Legislative pages

The Speaker .....	89
-------------------	----

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

#### Cancer treatment

Mrs Pupatello .....	96
Mr Maves .....	97

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 24 avril 2001

### PÉTITIONS

#### Garderies d'enfants

M. Lalonde .....	91
------------------	----

### PETITIONS

#### Sign language interpreters

Mr Bartolucci .....	89
---------------------	----

#### Child care

Mr Kormos .....	90
-----------------	----

#### Doctor shortage

Mr Martiniuk .....	90
--------------------	----

#### School facilities

Mr Cleary .....	90
-----------------	----

#### Protection of minors

Mr Gill .....	90
---------------	----

#### Education reform

Mr Kennedy .....	91
------------------	----

#### Magnetic resonance imaging

Mr Patten .....	91
-----------------	----

#### Veterinary services

Mrs Dombrowsky .....	91
----------------------	----



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Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

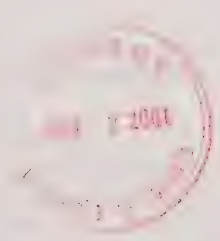
**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**  
Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 25 April 2001**

**Mercredi 25 avril 2001**



Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 April 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 avril 2001

*The House met at 1331.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** I'll take the opportunity to speak a bit about the announcement by the Minister of Consumer and Business Services this past Monday. The announcement concerned the registration of vital statistics on-line and I'm very disappointed. This doesn't do anything for the small business community in Ontario. The small business community in Ontario is normally used to the extolling of the importance, the virtues and the contribution that they make to our province and indeed to all the people in Ontario. But when it comes to help on a daily basis, we see absolutely nothing coming from this particular government.

There are a number of areas where the small business community is looking to the government to assist them in providing much necessary help. Tax is the number one enemy of the small business community in Ontario. Now, the deregulation and the sale of Ontario Hydro is going to affect in a very adverse manner the operations of the small business people in Ontario. They have limited resources to face the challenges on a daily basis, new technologies which they cannot afford. Accessing new financing for the small business community is absolutely vital to continue to thrive in a very competitive market.

I hope, when the minister engages himself in this consultation process with the stakeholders, that he will come back to this House and announce good reforms, good changes that will bring long-term stability to the small business community in Ontario.

Do I have another 40 seconds, or are we going back in our time? I'm delighted to take them.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Sergio:** Yes, indeed. I have to bring this message to the House, not only to you, Mr Speaker, but to the members of the government, that when it comes to extolling the virtues of small business, we say that small business people in Ontario have created 80% to 85% of the jobs in the last five to seven years, but on an individual basis the small business community is left on its own.

This is what I want to tell the minister: Do come back to the House and bring reforms that indeed will bring

long-lasting stability and sustainability to the small business people in Ontario.

#### NORTHUMBERLAND ECONOMY

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I rise in the House today to talk about an excellent example of how working together indeed achieves results. Two weeks ago, federal member of Parliament Paul Macklin, County Warden Bill Finley and myself combined efforts to co-ordinate an economic summit in my riding of Northumberland. This day-long conference was held at the beautiful Golden Beach Resort on Rice Lake. The reason for organizing this event was to discover ways to re-invigorate our local economy. It was an opportunity for local leaders to review our present situation and discuss opportunities for future initiatives.

More than 80 people attended this brainstorming session, including representatives from economic development offices, post-secondary institutions, government officials and local business owners. All in all, the day was a great success, leaving participants enthused about our prospects for moving forward with a great county-wide economic development strategy.

A clever man once said, "If we don't hang together, we will most assuredly all hang separately." That being said, I take this opportunity to thank all of those who took part, and to commend Mr Macklin and Mr Finley for working with me to improve Northumberland's economic environment.

#### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** Fury, outrage, shame: these are the words that the people of St Paul's have shared with me, and these are the words that I feel describe what Mike Harris has done to our public education system. We have a system in crisis and a system in turmoil, and we now have an incredibly sad and shameful situation where the symbolism has met with the reality and the schools are literally infested with rodents. They literally stink. They're literally full of garbage. Of course, right now we have 560 schools closed in Toronto, affecting over 300,000 students. Over 20,000 students have been out in Toronto for four weeks.

On the other hand, instead of taking the \$1.8 billion out of education that Mike Harris did and instead of tying the hands of everybody with their funding formula, Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have put

forward positive solutions for peace and progress in our public education system. I urge the residents of St Paul's to call me if they want details on that.

The parents have told me that they think this government doesn't care about kids and working families and public education, they think they're warring with workers for the sake of warring with workers, and that they would forgo their \$200 cheque in a second if their kids could get some quality public education. It's time for the government of Ontario to act on the solutions put forward by the Ontario Liberals, for the sake of the kids now and for the next generation.

### CUTBACKS

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I have a little story that was allegedly written by the Premier. It reads in the following manner:

(1) For considerable periods, the four oboe players had nothing to do. Their number should be reduced and their work spread out over the whole orchestra.

(2) Forty violins were playing identical notes. This is unnecessary duplication and the section should be drastically cut. If a larger volume of sound is required, it could be achieved through an electronic amplifier. However, no extra funding will be provided for the amplifier. The musicians must raise the funding for this themselves.

(3) Musicians will only be paid for the number of minutes that they are actually performing. This does not include rehearsal time. Rests in the music will be added up and deducted from each paycheck.

(4) The lesser instruments, such as tuba and trombone, do not need time with a qualified conductor. A music technician could be contracted to do the job instead.

(5) No useful purpose is served by repeating with horns the passage that has already been handled by the strings. If all such redundant passages were eliminated, the concert could be reduced to 20 minutes.

The Premier is a cultured man. He knows what he's talking about.

1340

### HORSE RIDING SAFETY

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** As spring arrives in Ontario, many children start to think of their upcoming birthdays and to plan an activity to make their party the best among their friends. Children love horses, and a day at the riding stable with their friends is a fantastic birthday party event. An ever-increasing number of Ontarians are choosing to go horseback riding for recreational purposes, but many of these weekend riders are inexperienced and have no idea what to expect.

Many of the riders are children who do not have the strength to control a large and unpredictable animal. Several of these children have been hurt and some have been killed in accidents which could have been prevented. A riding helmet, boots and breakaway stirrups

are simple pieces of equipment which need to be worn every time, every ride.

If 10-year-old Elizabeth Hader had been provided with safety gear on that April Sunday in 1999, she might be alive today. It is nothing less than a tragedy that a little girl who loved horses was involved in such a senseless accident.

For this reason, I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House about an important piece of legislation, An Act to increase the safety of equestrian riders, which will be introduced today. My private member's bill is scheduled for second reading on May 3.

An Act to increase the safety of equestrian riders is a much-needed piece of legislation to provide minimum safety standards to an unregulated industry. By requiring that riding establishments provide certified helmets and proper footwear to riders under 18, we will be putting the safety of our young people first, and we will be doing everything we can to see that preventable accidents are just that—prevented.

I ask for your support of my private member's bill.

### PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Janet Reno, Michael J. Fox: there are common threads among these people. I would like to read a proclamation to the House:

"Whereas the Parkinson Society of Canada is a national non-profit voluntary organization; and

"Whereas the Brantford and Area Parkinson Support Group provides information and support to Parkinsonians and their families that meet the second Wednesday of every month from 2 pm to 4 pm at the Church of the Nazarene; and

"Whereas the Brantford and Area Parkinson Support Group actively supports research to find the cause and the cure of Parkinson's disease;

"Therefore, I proclaim the month of April 2001 as Parkinson's Awareness Month."

This proclamation, read into this record, the federal record and the municipal record, was spearheaded by a local citizen who became involved in this organization due to his own situation. This is a letter he wrote that was published in the Brantford and Area Parkinson Support Group magazine, and I quote:

"I am 49 years old and I was diagnosed with Parkinson's four years ago. My symptoms became severe enough to go on disability last year. Brantford was holding its first annual Superwalk in September, where the local MPP was a guest speaker and was to lead the walk. Knowing I had Parkinson's, he invited me to come along, so I did, one half-hour before the start. Needless to say, I had no sponsors.

I was so impressed with the people that I met that I started to attend the support meetings. I felt I could be of some help, so I asked the facilitator to give me some sponsor sheets for the next year. She gave me about 50. I have, as of April, filled 45 of them and have asked for



200 more. My plan is to make more than all of Brantford did last year, and at \$6,350 I am well on my way.

"I volunteered for the Superwalk committee ... and have begun as co-facilitator in Brantford. With help, I lined up four guest speakers.... These people are so nice and very supportive. God bless them all."

He now devotes his time to educating schoolchildren and raising funds for researching Parkinson's disease. I personally offer my thanks and prayers to my brother and his family as they fight this courageous fight.

### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I'm very disappointed when I hear of the current condition of schools in the Toronto District School Board due to the strike of the public school support workers.

In our homes, I would hope we would not create and leave garbage around as is happening in the schools. In our homes and businesses, do we not pick up after ourselves? We don't vandalize our buildings, furnishings and other items we need and use daily. I understand that, in some schools, stairs and walls have been smeared with eggs. Paint bombs have been thrown at the outside of the buildings. Toilets have been plugged with paper and other objects. Garbage is accumulating in the hallways. Windows, historically valued art work and other items have been smashed. Who is creating this mess and destruction, strikers or students?

We all know the value of education and how fortunate we are in Ontario and Canada to have the opportunity to go to school. Why, then, do we have to close our schools due to vandalism and lack of personal responsibility for garbage and dirt that those who attend the schools have created? Maybe we should teach more about life skills, respect and responsibility.

### ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** On April 1, I received a letter from a constituent who is wondering when the legislation for the Ontario disabilities act will be passed. I will quote from Susan's letter:

"My husband has multiple sclerosis and is in a wheelchair. We have had to make many renovations to our home in order to make it accessible for the wheelchair. We didn't have a choice....

"Every day of our lives we are faced with barriers. Recently I took my husband to the eye specialist. We get in the office and the secretary doesn't know if the wheelchair will fit. It doesn't, off we go—we were told that the appointment should have been made through McMaster." This is fine, given that even with three weeks' notice, we can't get DARTS to accommodate him. "On our way out my husband has to use the bathroom. I ask the lady at the snack bar where is there an

accessible bathroom." She said yes: "It is down in the basement."

"On New Year's Eve we went out for dinner. We started researching an accessible restaurant, we asked all the right questions." Unfortunately we didn't check it out physically. "It was accessible as far as getting in the door," but once we were in, "forget it. Our friend and myself pretty well had to dismantle the wheelchair to get it in the bathroom, stand guard outside the door...." Imagine, Mr Speaker, what this does for the dignity of the gentleman. "You get past," Susan says, "being embarrassed when you are angry."

They visited their daughter and had trouble accessing the bathrooms there. The hotel was only partially accessible. Susan says these are only a few examples of what they encounter.

These are legitimate complaints. I agree with my constituent. If a society is judged by how it treats its weak and vulnerable, Mike Harris should be ashamed of himself with respect to what he has done to society in Ontario.

### CONESTOGO DAM

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I rise on a crucially important issue in my riding of Waterloo-Wellington, and that is the need to repair the Conestogo dam.

Described by the Globe and Mail as one of Ontario's largest dams, Conestogo dam controls water flow for the Conestogo River and the Grand River, affecting the water supply for much of Waterloo region and the city of Brantford.

The gates on this dam, which normally control the flow of water, are broken, and it's estimated that it will cost between \$1.2 million and \$1.5 million to repair them. In the spring, without repairs, the dam could fail or collapse, resulting in a catastrophic flash flood in which lives most likely would be lost.

In the summertime, when the river water flow is low, the dam gates are opened to raise the levels and cleanse the water downstream. If the gates aren't working properly, drinking water could become dangerous. These are worst-case scenarios, but they're identified as realistic by the Grand River Conservation Authority. They believe the province must be a major partner in paying for the repairs to make absolutely certain that these worst-case scenarios never happen.

I support this position. I have raised this issue with the Premier in a private meeting earlier this year, with the government caucus, and I want to thank the Minister of Natural Resources for meeting with leaders of the Grand River Conservation Authority. The minister also attended the recent meeting that I arranged for GRCA officials with David Lindsay, president and CEO of the SuperBuild Corp. Yesterday, I had a chance to raise this issue with the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Finance.

My position on this matter is clear: the province of Ontario cannot abdicate its responsibility to assist conservation authorities in necessary flood control projects. I will continue to raise this issue until it's resolved.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the first report of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

1350

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAMS ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LES PROGRAMMES DE SANTÉ ET DE SÉCURITÉ POUR ÉTUDIANTS

Mr Gravelle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to bring health and safety programs to Ontario students / *Projet de loi 9, Loi visant à offrir des programmes de santé et de sécurité aux étudiants de l'Ontario.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. The member, for a short statement.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** As you know, this coming Saturday, April 28, is the national day of mourning for workers who lost their lives on the job. It is with that in mind that I have reintroduced my private member's bill, An Act to bring health and safety programs to Ontario students.

What better tribute could we pay to those who have lost their lives than to bring forward legislation that could save lives in the future? This legislation, which was initiated almost five years ago by Ross Singleton of the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups in Thunder Bay, will guarantee needed health and safety instruction in the classroom for all Ontario students.

I hope that all members of the House will support the need for this guarantee to be legislated into law and will support it throughout the process.

### LIMITATIONS ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA PRESCRIPTION DES ACTIONS

Mr Young moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to revise the Limitations Act / *Projet de loi 10, Loi révisant la Loi sur la prescription des actions.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** This bill, if passed, would reform and dramatically modernize the existing Limitations Act, and that is a law that was passed in 1910.

The existing act is based on a number of English statutes dating back to the 16th century. No major changes have been made to the law on limitations for almost a decade.

The proposed Limitations Act, 2001, would consolidate many limitation periods into one statute and create two very clear and very fair time limits. Our government believes there are certain circumstances, however, where there should be no restrictions placed upon a lawsuit. Those circumstances would provide special exceptions to protect vulnerable people, to protect the environment and to protect the public purse.

If passed, the bill would eliminate confusion and would balance the interests of plaintiffs with the interests of defendants. For plaintiffs, this would mean they would have enough time to discover a claim and start a law suit. For defendants, this would mean that after a set period of time they would have greater certainty in their lives.

### CITY OF ELLIOT LAKE ACT, 2001

Mr Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr4, An Act respecting the City of Elliot Lake.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill is referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

### REMEMBRANCE DAY OBSERVANCE AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'OBSERVATION DU JOUR DU SOUVENIR

Mr Wood moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act to amend the Remembrance Day Observance Act, 1997 / *Projet de loi 11, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur l'observation du jour du Souvenir.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. The member, for a short statement.

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** This bill grants employees the right to take a leave of absence from work without pay of three hours between 10 am and 1 pm on each Remembrance Day so that they may participate in observances for those who died serving their country in wars and in peacekeeping efforts.

Attendance was up at Remembrance Day ceremonies last year in many communities in Ontario, and this was



due in part to the fact that many were not at work on a Saturday. This bill, if passed, will give almost everyone the chance to observe Remembrance Day in the way he or she deems most appropriate. This bill is substantially similar to one I introduced in the last session.

## HORSE RIDING SAFETY ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES CAVALIERS

Mrs Molinari moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 12, An Act to increase the safety of equestrian riders / Projet de loi 12, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des cavaliers.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for Thornhill for a short statement.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** The purpose of the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, a private member's bill, is to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that riders use proper safety equipment, including safety helmets.

I am bringing this bill forward in memory of Elizabeth Hader, who passed away just two years ago on April 18, 1999, and countless other children throughout the province who have met untimely deaths as a result of unsafe riding conditions in the province of Ontario. The bill also amends the Highway Traffic Act and makes it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 years to ride or be mounted on a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment.

Parents and guardians of riders under the age of 16 would also be guilty of an offence if they authorize or knowingly permit young riders to contravene the proposed provisions.

## BACK TO SCHOOL ACT (TORONTO AND WINDSOR), 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR LE RETOUR À L'ÉCOLE (TORONTO ET WINDSOR)

Mr Stockwell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to resolve labour disputes affecting the Toronto District School Board and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board / Projet de loi 13, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail qui touchent les conseils scolaires de district appelés Toronto District School Board et Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1358 to 1403.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia
Amott, Ted	Elliott, Brenda	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Flaherty, Jim	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Galt, Doug	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Boyer, Claudette	Hardeman, Ernie	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Hastings, John	Runciman, Robert W.
Brown, Michael A.	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Bryant, Michael	Hudak, Tim	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Jackson, Cameron	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sterling, Norman W.
Cleary, John C.	Johnson, Bert	Stewart, R. Gary
Clement, Tony	Kennedy, Gerard	Stockwell, Chris
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Tumbull, David
Cordiano, Joseph	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Crozier, Bruce	Martiniuk, Gerry	Wilson, Jim
Cunningham, Dianne	Maves, Bart	Witmer, Elizabeth
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mazzilli, Frank	Wood, Bob
Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton	Young, David
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Norm	
Dunlop, Garfield	Molinari, Tina R.	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Marchese, Rosario
Christopherson, David	Lankin, Frances	Martin, Tony
Hampton, Howard		

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 64; the nays are 7.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

The Minister, for a short statement.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I'll have a minister's statement.

## BRAIN TUMOUR AWARENESS MONTH ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR LE MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION AUX TUMEURS CÉRÉBRALES

Mr Wood moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to encourage awareness of the need for the early detection and treatment of brain tumours / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à favoriser la sensibilisation à la nécessité du dépistage et du traitement précoces des tumeurs cérébrales.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the member have a short statement?

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** Mr Speaker, this bill points out that early detection and treatment of brain tumours are vital to survive from this devastating disease.

Brain tumours strike people of all ages, from newborns to seniors, crossing all economic, social and ethnic boundaries and all walks of life. Brain tumour research,

patient and family support services and awareness among the general public are essential to promote early detection and treatment of brain tumours.

The bill proposes that the month of October in each year be proclaimed Brain Tumour Awareness Month. I hope that October 2001 will be the first such month. This bill is substantially similar to one which I introduced in the last session, and in response to which I have received over 100 letters of support from across Canada.

## GREATER JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001

### SUR UNE OBLIGATION ACCRUE DE RENDRE COMPTE EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES NOMINATIONS À LA MAGISTRATURE

Mr Wood moved the first reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to provide for greater accountability in judicial appointments / *Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à accroître l'obligation de rendre compte en ce qui concerne les nominations à la magistrature.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say aye.

All those opposed will please say nay.

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Does the member have a short statement?

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** Mr Speaker, this bill is intended to provide greater public accountability for judicial appointments. It proposes to do that by making the appointment process for justices of the peace the same as that for judges: having the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee publish the criteria used in assessing candidates; permitting the Legislature by resolution to set or change these criteria; having the names of all the people found qualified and suitable for appointment submitted to the Attorney General for consideration; and requiring approval by the Legislature of all proposed appointments before they become effective.

For the first time in the history of this province, the Legislature would set the criteria for judicial appointments and the Attorney General would be responsible to the Legislature for following them in each and every appointment. Surely, it is time to take this process out of the back rooms and put it fully in the hands of all the elected representatives. Transparency and democracy do work.

This bill is substantially similar to one which I introduced and which received first reading in the last session.

1410

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** On a point of order: I seek unanimous consent to debate and pass a resolution which I have already tabled.

Briefly, the title of the resolution is a Liberal back-to-school plan. It would have the effect of quickly and fairly resolving the disputes presently in Toronto and Windsor.

**The Speaker:** The leader of the official opposition has asked for unanimous consent to introduce a motion that deals with ending the education strikes. Is it agreed? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### SMART GROWTH

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to address the ninth step in our government's action plan to keep Ontario strong: Smart Growth. Over the past six years our government has put conditions in place so that Ontario is strong, growing and competitive. We are building not only for today; we are building for tomorrow. Smart Growth builds on our vision for Ontario's future. It's a vision that encourages growth. It's one that will make sure all regions in the province, from the smallest village to the largest city, can reach their economic potential.

Growth improves our standard of living. It allows for sustainability of our health system and our social safety net. Growth must also improve our quality of life. Smart Growth is based on three main principles: a strong economy, strong communities and a healthy environment. Our vision is for a made-in-Ontario plan, and it will mean a brighter future for people in every part of our province.

All Ontarians understand the need for planning. Just as you plan for a new home or a vacation or retirement, so must our government plan for the future of our province.

To date, our government policies have led to more than 822,000 net new jobs in Ontario. More than 578,000 people have escaped welfare. Businesses are investing again and expanding. Homes are being built at a very rapid pace. Since 1995, more than 300,000 new homes have been built in the province. Over the same period, more than 80,000 homebuyers have benefited from this government's land tax rebate transfer programs.

The population too is growing. From nine million people in 1985, Ontario grew to 11.5 million in 2000 and is expected to be home to 14 million people by the year 2015. That's a lot of people who will need schools, hospitals, homes and roads, and our government has recognized the need to plan for this growth. We must plan for more than just infrastructure. We must plan, and plan smartly. It is important that we consider all the needs in all areas and use our resources wisely, strategically and well.

Smart Growth offers provincial and local decision-makers a forward-thinking, long-term approach for doing just that. We will ask tough questions: what kind of life



do we want for ourselves and for our children five years out, 10 years out, 20 years from now? Will we live in cities or in suburbs? Will we live in rural or in urban? How can we ensure the best use of land in each? How do we reduce gridlock? How do we save our air, and where do we put our parks? With our commitment to a strong economy, strong communities and a healthy environment as a guide, Smart Growth will provide a filter, a context to help us respond to these questions.

It will also help us direct resources so that we can consume fewer natural resources while enabling more ambitious development goals. It will help us revitalize our city cores. It will focus on making our communities more livable. It will support using the infrastructure we have effectively, and building and using any new infrastructure in an efficient way. It will link decisions on transportation, infrastructure, planning and public investment.

Smart Growth is all about promoting growth and managing it well. It will offer Ontarians choice and flexibility, no matter where they live in the province. It will help Ontario grow responsibly, for our benefit and for the benefit of our children and our grandchildren.

Our vision of Smart Growth has as one of its three main pillars an economy that is strong, growing and competitive. As you know, it is through a strong economy and new jobs that Ontarians gain hope, opportunity and prosperity. It is also through a strong economy that government can support those services that mean so much to the people of Ontario, like quality health care and education. But economic growth just does not happen on its own. It stems from difficult choices, like cutting taxes and balancing the books and reducing red tape. Our government will continue to make the tough decisions needed to keep Ontario on the right track.

Smart Growth will not just happen either. It too will require tough decisions and right choices. That's why today I'm announcing that this spring, our government will continue to hold consultations across Ontario to build co-operation among partners and gather the innovative ideas necessary to support a successful made-in-Ontario Smart Growth strategy.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I realize there are other parties that don't like to consult the people of Ontario. They like to prefer to rely on American experts. That's not our approach.

The government will review the Planning Act and then propose amendments necessary to meet the Smart Growth needs of the 21st century.

SuperBuild Corp will help increase investment in Ontario's infrastructure by exploring and developing innovative partnerships with businesses and other levels of government.

The government will introduce legislation to encourage the clean-up and revitalization of former industrial and commercial sites, known as brownfields.

The government stands firmly behind our commitment to the redevelopment of Toronto's waterfront.

We have set ourselves ambitious, yet achievable goals. Our goal is for Ontario to enjoy the best-performing economy and the highest quality of life in North America. Our made-in-Ontario vision of Smart Growth is instrumental to this goal, where it will be synonymous with a strong, efficient and competitive economy, sound neighbourhoods and communities and a clean, healthy environment. It will allow us to meet the challenges of the 21st century and it will mean a better quality of life for all the people of Ontario.

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** During the past six years, our government has made tough choices, and as a result Ontario is once again one of the best places in the world to live, work and raise a family.

My ministry's contribution to Smart Growth will be to provide more effective, more efficient transportation services and lower transportation-related pollution. A more effective and efficient transportation system will support continued economic investment and the creation of new jobs. It will also preserve our quality of life.

Every day, millions of people travel our highways. Businesses rely on our highway system to get the materials that go into their products. When these products are finished, the highways are used to get them to market.

I am pleased to be able to announce several new initiatives today. First, Ontario must prepare for the dramatic population and economic growth of the future. We must ensure access to markets in the United States and support our tourism industry, so we will work with other governments to create modern international gateways at the Windsor and Niagara borders.

This spring the government will review the results of the Niagara Peninsula needs assessment study. In addition to being one of Ontario's principle economic gateways, the Niagara Peninsula is also one of our province's prime tourist spots, and we will take decisive action to address the area's long-range transportation requirements.

As we look to promote economic development throughout the Niagara and Hamilton areas, we will also look to reduce the pressure on the tender-fruit lands of Niagara. These are one of our province's most important agricultural assets and they must be preserved.

Smart Growth means that as we develop a highway system to meet Ontario's future needs, we are also sensitive to the needs of both communities and the environment.

Our government will also explore adding carpool and commuter bus lanes to provincial highways to improve traffic flow and air quality in Ontario. This initiative will reward commuters who relieve highway congestion by carpooling. It will also reward those who reduce the number of vehicles on the road by taking buses.

1420

Earlier this spring I announced my ministry would undertake several transportation needs assessments. These studies will help us preserve and protect future highway corridors and identify which existing roads need to be—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** It's a little too loud in here. We give a little bit of leeway, but it's getting past that, where I can't hear. Just remember, you get a reply to this and if you start, the other side is going to start. So I'd appreciate your co-operation.

Sorry, Minister, for the interruption.

**Hon Mr Clark:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. When it comes time to undertake this work, we must consider how we can best utilize public partnerships to expand the province's highway network. To that end, the Ministry of Transportation and the Ontario SuperBuild Corp will lead an interministerial task force coordinating a review of the expansion of our province's 400 series. Their goal will be to find ways to build new roads without putting the fiscal burden on the taxpayers.

Our government will also work with municipalities to re-establish a consistent, driver-friendly system of designation for Ontario's provincial highways and municipal roads.

In a sixth new initiative, we will consult with the coroner, emergency crews and others to explore ways of opening highways more quickly following accidents. We expect to have their recommendations by the end of this year.

I would like to conclude today by noting that my ministry is very pleased to be able to take an active role in contributing to the government's made-in-Ontario Smart Growth strategy. In the weeks and months to come, I am confident that our efforts, along with those being made by other ministries and agencies, will lead to a healthy and prosperous future for Ontario.

#### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** As members are aware, staff of the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board have been on strike since March 26 and staff at the Toronto District School Board have been on strike since March 31. In both situations contract bargaining has come to an impasse. It should be obvious to all members that with the continuance of the current disruption, the successful completion of the students' studies at both boards is adversely affected.

As a responsible government, we cannot allow our children's education to be held hostage by labour negotiations which at this time are going nowhere. We have given the school boards and the unions time to achieve a mutually acceptable negotiated settlement. Now the priority is to get the children's education back on track. That is why today I've introduced a bill entitled the Back to School Act (Toronto and Windsor), 2001. This bill would get students back into the classrooms and end both strikes.

The government always prefers that disputes be resolved through the collective bargaining process. The bill, if passed, would order school boards to resume normal operations as soon as possible, at the latest, two days after the act comes into force.

If negotiations fail, the matters at both boards will go to mediation-arbitration. Under the legislation, if passed,

a neutral third party will be appointed as a mediator-arbitrator for each dispute. In particular, Ross L. Kennedy would be appointed for Windsor and Stephen C. Raymond for Toronto.

Until new agreements are reached, the terms and conditions of employment would remain those that were in effect when the labour disruption began. The bill also would provide for maximum penalties of \$2,000 for individuals and \$25,000 per board or union for non-compliance. Each day of non-compliance would be a separate offence.

We want the parties to reach an agreement and achieve a quick ending to their labour negotiations. We want school boards and their employees to be able to negotiate a fair and reasonable contract. But this must be done without disruption to students in the classroom. The best solution is a local solution, where the school board and the union achieve a mutually acceptable, fiscally responsible negotiated settlement. In fact, in many cases, local solutions have been reached with agreements that are fair to both employees and taxpayers.

Like parents, the government does not want children's education disrupted because of disputes between school boards and unions. We want students to benefit from Ontario's challenging new curriculum and assure the province of quality provided by province-wide standards. That is why we are continuing to put students first by introducing the proposed Back to School Act (Toronto and Windsor), 2001.

If passed, this bill would provide a fair and balanced approach. It would get Toronto's students back in their classrooms, it would allow the school boards and the unions to continue to negotiate toward a fair settlement. If the school boards and unions are unable to resolve their differences, the act would provide them will access to mediation-arbitration to help reach a settlement.

I know the children in Toronto and Windsor-Essex want their schools to return to normal. We want these students in school, learning and growing. I ask all members to support this legislation and to allow us to proceed to second and third readings today, so our children's education will get back to normal as soon as possible.

Hopefully, with all-party support this bill could be passed in this House today and we could have the children back in school as soon as possible.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I wish to respond to the Minister of Labour's statement and his legislation.

Today, I am proud to announce that we have tabled a back-to-school plan. It's a plan that is fair, it's a plan that is fast and, most importantly, it's a plan that is in the best interests of our working families. If the government will endorse this plan, we can have our children back in school tomorrow in Toronto and in Windsor.

Our plan calls for the following: schools to reopen immediately; striking support workers and the school boards to take the dispute to binding arbitration with a significant new component, and that component is the following:



We would give the arbitrator the power to order the Harris government to invest more in education in order to reach a fair settlement. In other words, the arbitrator would be able to take into account the boards' ability to pay and the province's ability to fund education properly.

The plan is fair. It makes it perfectly clear that the buck stops with the provincial government, which is the source of funding in education and this is the source of the current crisis in our schools.

I can tell you the plan is fast. If the government will endorse this plan, we can have our kids back in school tomorrow. Back-to-work legislation, on the other hand, could take several days to pass as the third party has signalled its intention to slow its passage. We urge the government to put the interests of our children and the interests of our working families first.

We urge the government to adopt our resolution and make the necessary amendments to legislation. This will allow the reopening of our schools in a way that's faster and fairer and in the best interests of Ontario families.

We on this side of the House are on the side of working families. Schoolchildren in Windsor are into their fifth week of a strike. In Toronto, many of the children have been out of school for four weeks running now. Working families are looking to us to do two things for them. First of all, they want their children back in school. Secondly—and we are working actively on this front—they are looking for a new government that puts the interests of their children ahead of ideology.

Unlike this government, we are working hard to earn the trust of Ontario's working families. That's why we brought forward a peace plan that will return extra-curricular activities to our schools. It's a good plan, but today's headlines tell us the government still prefers labour war to peace in our schools. It's also why we put forward a plan to invest in our schools, starting with smaller class sizes. Again, the government has failed to adopt those of our ideas which require an investment in the future.

We urge the government not to make that same mistake for a third time running. We urge the government to instead adopt our back-to-school plan, a plan that is fairer and faster and in the best interests of our children and our working families.

### SMART GROWTH

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** For the third day running, I had a chance today to witness part of the Mike Harris nearly dead tour. Today the issue is smart growth, where made-in-Ontario smart growth has been exposed as smart growth by dummies. Today's announcements on smart growth do nothing to get at the core issues. They do nothing to help the commuters in Ontario deal with it.

There was one new initiative, though, to the credit of the government: it wants to remove the carnage from the roads faster after accidents. If only could we wish that we could more quickly remove the carnage of that government from the Legislature and get on with reducing

gridlock in a meaningful way in developing better communities.

*Interjections.*

1430

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. Just before we begin, the member for Simcoe North, come to order. You've been shouting out. I've yelled, "Order," three times now. This is your last warning; and while we're at it, the member for London-Fanshawe, it's his last warning as well.

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** I'll take my five-minute speech and deliver it in 20 seconds.

Fundamentally, we on this side of the House want to know, like in the old Wendy's commercial, "Where's the beef?" Einstein, a famous scientist, once defined "insanity" as doing things the same way as they've always been done and expecting a different result. I hope that isn't what you mean by Smart Growth.

### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I have a few comments on the government's so-called back-to-work legislation. First I want to respond directly, though, to the comments made by the Minister of Labour where he says, "Contract bargaining has come to an impasse."

That is not true. Here in Toronto they are still trying to bargain, and in Windsor the representative of the board has written a letter asking the union to continue bargaining. So we need to have it established right off the bat that the parties want to continue to bargain, and they are continuing to bargain.

Further, if the government's priority is that children be back in school, then why don't you put back the \$16 million your government has pocketed during this labour dispute for the Toronto Board of Education and the \$4 million you've pocketed in Windsor during the labour dispute there? There we would have the makings to ensure that a collective agreement could be negotiated and signed.

Everybody in this province should read this back-to-work legislation. It is abominable, and I want to quote from it. First of all, the government says there are going to be neutral arbitrators. Read the legislation. It says, "If a mediator-arbitrator is unable or unwilling to perform his duties ... the minister shall forthwith appoint a new mediator-arbitrator and notify the parties of the name...." But in appointing a replacement arbitrator, "the minister may appoint a person who has no previous experience as an arbitrator," who "has not previously been or is not recognized as a person mutually acceptable" to both the union and the employer, "is not a member of a class of persons which has been ... recognized as comprising individuals who are mutually" acceptable to the union and the employer.

This legislation is abominable. It's astonishing. You don't even have to be an arbitrator to go and decide these matters. That's how important this government thinks our

children's education is. You don't even have to be mutually acceptable.

But there is something that is worth reading in this legislation because it exposes what's going on here. It says that when the arbitrator makes a decision—"consistency with Education Act and regulations... The mediator-arbitrator shall make an award that ... is consistent with the Education Act and the regulations" thereunder.

What does that mean? It says to us that the real problem all along here has been the funding formula. The funding formula is restrictive and the arbitrator will have to absolutely abide by the government's funding formula.

If you want a deal, and you want a deal tonight because the parties are still bargaining, put the \$16 million that you've taken from the Toronto board of education during the labour dispute, take it out of your pocket, give it back to the board so they can go to the table with it and you'll have a settlement by tonight. The same would apply in Windsor.

### SMART GROWTH

Just a few words about Smart Growth. I searched in vain to find what the government was talking about in terms of smart growth in their statement. I see that they're going to sit down with municipalities and talk about putting new signs on the highways. Let me tell you why they need to do that. After the government downloaded all kinds of highways on to the municipalities, there is no consistency any more. You've created a horrendous problem. But that's not smart growth. That's just covering up your own mistake.

Next, the government wants to consult with coroners and emergency workers about how to clear highways after accidents. The priority should be to ensure that we have the rapid transit systems in place so that we have less accidents on our highways and our highways are less crowded. We don't see that, either.

The government plans to build seven new expressways, but they have no money for urban transit. That, by definition, is not smart growth. That, by definition, is making the problem worse. If you live in dense, urban areas, you have to devote time, attention and money to urban transit. It is the most efficient, the most cost-effective way to move a large number of people within urban areas. Yet the government talks about smart growth. It has no strategy, no plan for rapid transit; no plan, no strategy for urban transit. There is no smart growth here; there's just a buzz word, and underneath the buzz word, it's empty.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Education. Sadly, and

all too predictably, we find ourselves now in the face, once again, of strikes which are affecting thousands of Ontario schoolchildren. We have put forward a back-to-school plan which we are asking you now to consider. I outlined the details of the plan a few moments ago, but I think of real importance here is the fact that you've got some legislation that the Minister of Labour has tabled today. The third party is telling us that they intend to block or delay passage of that bill. That could mean that this bill would take up to a week to pass.

I've got a plan here to put schools—

*Interjections.*

**Mr McGuinty:** I've got a plan to get our kids back to school today. I won't be delaying passage of this bill. I won't be working to block passage of the bill. But I've got something here, Madam Minister, which can get our kids back to school today. Will you support our back-to-school plan?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** The honourable member knows we have already introduced legislation that will actually solve this particular dispute. With all due respect to the honourable member, we have been in this House not that long ago when his party did promise to support legislation to bring the students back in Hamilton-Wentworth, and that didn't come to pass.

The other thing is that we haven't seen the plan from the honourable member. We have shared our legislation with his party. But we know what his plan has done before. We've heard what he wants to do. When we want a stronger curriculum, he wants to weaken it. When we want standardized testing, he wants to stop that. When we are prepared to live with our financial responsibility, he wants to absolve all responsibility for the taxpayers' money and simply hand it to arbitrators. His solution for extracurriculars was to increase the students' workload to pay for the decrease in the teachers' workload. That's not an appropriate solution.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, it would be nice if at some point during your part-time career as Minister of Education you devoted yourself to the interests of Ontario's schoolchildren. We are putting forward—and I'll ask you to speak to the matter which I've put forward today and just ease off on the rants. We're talking about an effort here to put schoolchildren back in their classes. That's what working families want us to do. You've got a couple of options on the table now. You've got legislation—and I understand that when the only tool in your toolbox is a hammer, every problem starts to look like a nail. I understand that's the way you people over there operate. But there's a better way to do this. We can resolve this today. We can have schoolchildren in Windsor and Toronto back to class today.

That's why we've tabled this plan. It's realistic, it is practical, it's fair and it's fast. I ask you once again, Madam Minister, will you, in the interests of our children, support this plan?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With all due respect to the honourable member, I'll stack my hours on my job up with his



any day, by the way. Secondly, this government has a plan for quality education in this province. It includes back-to-work legislation that we brought in today, which—I agree with the honourable member—could resolve it today, and we'll see what happens this afternoon. But our plan also consists of a good, strong curriculum to give our kids what they need, more money for the classrooms, a comprehensive teacher testing program, and student testing so we know how well our kids can do, so parents can actually have the information they need to make intelligent choices about their children. That is the plan we have put forward. That is the plan we have the courage to implement. We will continue to do what parents and students need to have done and want to have done in our education system in this province.

1440

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, Ontario's working families understand the havoc you have wreaked in our public education system. You have robbed our children's teachers of their enthusiasm, you have sapped our schools of their spirit and you have taken away our children's extracurricular activities. We've got 60 work stoppages under the terms of the Mike Harris government. That is the record. That speaks for itself.

I'm asking you to do something today that is decidedly different. I'm asking you to act in the interests of Ontario's working families and their children. I'm asking you to support a plan that will get our children back to school today in Toronto and in Windsor. On behalf of those working families, Minister, why won't you support our plan today?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, a resolution from the opposition leader—I'm sure he would know this—doesn't accomplish anything. Legislation, which this government is introducing, will accomplish something. It can resolve this strike if the members of this House support it.

Havoc is not higher standards. Havoc is not new curriculum. Comprehensive teacher testing, a code of conduct: those are the things parents want. Act in the interests of students? You didn't act in the interests of students in Hamilton-Wentworth. You didn't act in the interests of students when you said "Let's increase their workload to pay for a decrease in teacher workload." That's not in the interests of students either.

We're going to stick to the commitments we made to the taxpayers, to teachers, to students, to parents. Quality education reform, performance-based system, parental choice: those are things that the parents and the students want out there.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** Minister, you said that you're doing things in the interests of students probably 10 times in the last three minutes. I want all the members across to look right over here in the gallery. Right over here in the gallery are students, student trustees from across the province. They've had the misfortune to live with the double-edged rhetoric that is coming forward from your side of the House. So I want you to address those students today and I want you to address, in a way you avoided with my leader, another

proposition. I want you to address their message to you today about extracurricular activities in this province.

Minister, you're very bold to say that somehow we're going to put them at a disadvantage. What they've said about your plan today is that it would be a travesty. The students of this province, their elected representatives here today, have condemned the idea that you would enact the other part of Bill 74. I want you to stand up and tell them, are you going to enact the other part of Bill 74? If you're not, which solution—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The member's time is up.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With all due respect to the honourable member, I should really hope his research department was better than the front page of the Toronto Star.

No, we're not. We've had this discussion in this House before. This continued scaremongering does not help teachers, does not help students.

The reason we have student trustees is because this government thought it was so important to have students on school boards, to have their voice. I was at the founding meeting of the association of student trustees. I've met with them. They have official stakeholder status with our ministry. They are giving and will continue to give us advice on all of the education quality initiatives we are putting in place.

Extracurricular activities are exceedingly important for our students. But you know what, Mr Speaker? We've had disagreements with the education system under Liberal government, under NDP government, under Conservative government. Disagreements are not new. Taking those disagreements into the classroom is wrong and it's not fair to students. Those individuals who do it should stop it.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, sitting over here is Karl Baldauf, who's the president of the student trustees of this province. There are representatives from school boards around the province. They sit in those classrooms when they aren't affected by the other misery you're inflicting on them, and they're the ones who want to know, 245 days into the school year, what is your solution? You have taken extracurricular activities away from them. You have, Minister. Last year, 70 of 72 boards had them, except for the two boards that cover your area. This year your staffing plan has caused them to go missing.

Minister, four months ago we gave you a peace plan. It has been approved by trustees, it has been approved by students, it has been approved by teacher federations, it has been approved by parents. Today there were minimum guidelines given to you by the student trustees. Your ministry staff were there to listen to them. Will you stand in the House today and guarantee to those students that what they say is in their interests—those minimum guidelines—will be met, and will you tell them the date you're going to meet them on for a solution to extracurricular activities?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I think the terms, the comments the student trustees made today, the conditions are very good. I've read them; I've heard them. I think they are

excellent conditions. But what has taken away extracurricular activities from some of those students where this has occurred is the work to rule by some individuals in our schools.

The opposition likes to talk about the task force report, which I have said is good and has good solid recommendations. We're doing the work to look at moving forward with those recommendations. But where are they on the recommendations that said the union should stop penalizing teachers who are doing extracurricular activities? I don't hear the Liberal Party expressing any support for that particular recommendation from our task force.

**Mr Kennedy:** You have one last chance. There are students here today. At the beginning of this year you were asked. You were given the chance. We said, "Take the cover page off our plan." Even before that, other groups said to you that there would be trouble, there would be problems. You were initiating it. You were asked—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Would the member for Beaches-East York come to order. As you know, you try to get down to that last question. We're not going to get to it if I have to stand up. I stopped the clock. We're going to continue.

The member for Parkdale-High Park.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, in your last response you broke one of their principles, which is to say these things need to happen peacefully. They need your urgent action. They want you to solve things in time for next fall.

You have refused to be the Minister of Education, to say you will take charge of this problem, that you will put one proposal on the table that you agree with that will fix things. You can't blame everybody else, surely, every single one of the 245 days since you took away extracurricular activities. Give these students today a commitment of something specific that you will do to solve this problem, to guarantee there will be extracurricular activities, if not in time for the rest of this year, which we would certainly hope, at least for next year, which requires you to act right away.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With all due respect to the honourable member, there are several proposals on the table. The task force did a good job of putting many recommendations on the table for consulting with the partners. They've given that to our government. We are looking at those recommendations and, as I said, I think some of them are very good.

Let's also be very clear. They talk about their so-called plan, which are the proposals the union had brought forward earlier. I appreciate that they want to put solutions on the table, and we all appreciate that you were doing that. But as I've said before, the difficulty with that plan—the students have not said they support your plan; the students have said they want long-term, sustainable, workable solutions. You were asking the students to increase their workload, for them to pay for a decrease in teacher workload. That's not the solution either. Those students deserve a solution. They deserve their extracurricular activities that have been denied

because of a work-to-rule campaign. I don't agree with that. I think it's unfair to the kids. I also think it's unfair when political disputes and labour disputes—

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. This is information from your own ministry's Web site. One of the things it points out is that today, even after your 8% rate increase, people in Detroit who consume electrical power pay 60% more than people in Toronto.

Your government says you're going to sell off Ontario's hydroelectric system to private companies. Minister, if you were at one of those private companies and you then could decide where you were going to sell the power, would you sell the power in Toronto for 60% less or would you sell it in Detroit for 60% more?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** There is a requirement in the Energy Competition Act of 1998 that this Legislature passed that the people of Ontario be looked after first. The government has appointed an independent market operator to ensure that's done.

Furthermore, and I've answered this for the honourable member before, it's physically impossible to transmit any more than a fifth of the daily power, the electricity, in this province. There just aren't enough wires in the United States, and by the way, the electrons go both ways. So although there's enough wire there for 4,000 megawatts of power in a 20,000 megawatt day, at any given time half the power's going this way because it goes back and forth all day.

So you couldn't physically sell enough power to the United States to put a dent in the price in our market at this point in history.

1450

**Mr Hampton:** This Web site also provides other interesting information, because as you're preparing to sell off our hydroelectricity system, you are actually building more transmission lines to the United States. Your own Web site points that out, that you are increasing the capacity right now to take Ontario's electricity and sell it into the United States.

My point remains the same: if a company can get 60% more by selling the power in Detroit, or 72% more by selling it in Boston or 145% more by selling it in New York city, and you yourself said the other day that once these power stations are sold off to private companies they're in a free market, what are you going to do, Minister, to stop them from selling the power in the United States and to stop them from saying to Ontario consumers, "If you want power, you pay the same the price we're getting in Detroit or Boston or New York"? What are you going to do to stop that?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** It is the Ontario Energy Board, headed by the Honourable Floyd Laughren, who has ordered that additional wires be built into the United



States. It wasn't the government. It's for reliability purposes. One only has to remember the ice storm of three years ago, where we needed power from the United States. Power goes back and forth all the time. The honourable member may want to know that millions of dollars are made each year after Ontarians are looked after. Millions of dollars are made each year, by the old Ontario Hydro and now Ontario Power Generation, in flowing electricity, when it's appropriate, to the United States. It's called excess electricity in Ontario. We don't need it.

When you're running nuclear plants and they're running well, they have to run full out. That's the way a Candu reactor works. It takes months to shut down. It's not like flicking a switch on and off. So when you're running them and the Power Workers Union is doing a good job pumping out that electricity, why not make millions of dollars and help pay off the debt your party did nothing about?

**Mr Hampton:** Here goes the Minister of Energy trying to change his story again. You acknowledged yesterday that we've been paying debt charges at Hydro for some years, so don't try to change the story again.

The issue is this: once you have created a market for international energy corporations, you will not be able to tell them what price they can sell their power at and where they can sell it. California tried to do that. After opening up the market, they tried to say to energy corporations, "You must sell power here and you must sell it at this price." You know what happened in California. Are you going to try to repeat that mistake too, Minister?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** You know, you totally lost me in that argument. We're not California. You can just stop making the comparisons because not one you've made in the last three days has anything to do with Ontario. You're trying to stretch some sort of facts. We're not California and we're not deregulating the market like California.

Our problem is we've got lots of power, unlike California and Alberta. We've got one company that produces 90% of that power. It has no competition. It's cost has never been checked. People have never been able to buy green power. There's never been any choice and we think consumers deserve choice. They deserve to get out of the malaise of power generation in this province and the sins of the monopoly of the past, and to move forward, build new plants and not tax their grandchildren by putting them further and further into debt like what happened over the last several decades with the old electricity system in this province. We're not going down that road any more. We have a positive new era in electricity. Wake up. The private sector is asking and consumers are asking us to open the market as soon as we can.

#### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** He's a funny guy. My question is to the Minister of Education.

Madame, why are you jumping on the strike now, when the two sides are so close to deal? I think, Minister—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. Come to order. Sorry for the interruption, member.

**Mr Marchese:** Well, Minister, you either know that they're negotiating or don't know—and if you don't know, it's worse. But I'm assuming, since you've got so many staff, that you know they're negotiating and that they're very close. I believe a solution is within reach, I do, and we all want to see the kids go back into the classroom. My question to you, Madame, is, why are you sabotaging a negotiated end to the strike?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I refer this to the Minister of Labour.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** We've been in contact with the negotiating parties, obviously, and have tried to keep abreast of the situation. The situation is fairly clear. The school board has taken the position that they are not in negotiations. One of the union officials has suggested that there has been an offer that has floated back to the school boards. The school boards considered the offer to be not significant and in fact not truly an offer that was worthy of further consideration.

So from all conversations that we've had, we have been informed that there are not meaningful negotiations taking place and there isn't meaningful opportunity to settle the strike in the very near future. I think any reasonable and responsible government at this point in time, with the thought of the parents and children in mind, would take this position of introducing legislation to protect the school year and protect those children who are trying to get through their school year in a timely fashion. So if you're suggesting there's meaningful legislation and they're this close to a deal, the only one who appears to be suggesting that is you, my friend.

**Mr Marchese:** The only suggestion I want to make to you is that I see your government arrogantly standing in the way of a possible solution here. There is a golden opportunity for you here to be accountable in a different way and that is that both in Toronto and in Windsor efforts are being made to negotiate a deal. I'm saying to you, get out of the way so that negotiation can take place in good faith. My question is, can you do that?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** With great respect, we have not been involved in either of these negotiations, one being five weeks and the other being four or five weeks. Without any movement by this Legislature—and apparently with the opposition of your caucus, which will extend the period of time for which the children will be out, causing concern for the children and the parents. The action needed to be taken because if we don't get co-operation from this whole House, it's going to take a number of days to pass this piece of legislation.

Now, I understand that your House leader is very proud of this. I find it reprehensible and you should be ashamed, because there is no close deal in place here. If there were, we wouldn't be involved. So to make the

suggestion to the public out there that they're close to a deal is both unfair and impractical. Furthermore, to stand in the way of children going back to school after four and five weeks of strike is beyond reprehensible. You should be ashamed and you should support this bill and pass it in 15 minutes. That's the responsible act to take.

#### NORTHERN MEDICAL SCHOOL

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, I'd like to ask you a specific question related to the creation of a medical school in northern Ontario. While all of us would like to believe that your announcement yesterday meets the goals of the proposal put forward by Lakehead and Laurentian universities, there are some legitimate concerns being expressed as a result of your statement in the House, as well as comments made by the Premier yesterday.

Minister, your strong emphasis on e-learning—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. If the member for Beaches-East York and the Minister of Labour want to carry on this conversation, do it outside. I can't hear. You're yelling across at each other. If you want to do it, go in the back and talk to each other. You can yell all you want at each other. You have loud voices and I can't hear. He's less than 20 feet away and I can't hear him.

Sorry, go ahead.

1500

**Mr Gravelle:** Minister, we have some legitimate concerns we'd like you to clarify, if you could. Your strong emphasis on e-learning, as well as the Premier's comments about the importance of Internet-based technology, leads some of us to question whether this school will be a free-standing, independent institution. In addition, your remarks yesterday that the medical school will be on a site or sites suggests you may not be committed to the co-location of the institution at Lakehead and Laurentian universities. Therefore, my question is, does your commitment to a northern medical school mean you are accepting and will implement the proposal put forward by Lakehead and Laurentian universities, and specifically, will you confirm that Lakehead University in Thunder Bay will be one of the sites for the medical school?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. Indeed, yesterday was a historic day for medical education and for remedying the physician shortage in Ontario. I think we can take pride in the fact that yesterday's announcement was all about this government making an important decision and saying we will go ahead.

The honourable member is asking for some details. I caution the honourable member that Rome wasn't built in a day. We want to get the kind of detail from the community as well as from the medical education experts. I can tell you that the response thus far has been very

positive. My point of view is that it goes beyond a virtual school—I know that was the concern of the honourable member the other day, and other honourable members as well. This is more than a virtual school. It needs a site or sites. We are quite looking forward to conversing with Laurentian, Lakehead, Windsor and all other interested post-secondary sectors to get their proposals on how to do it best.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** You've had the proposal from the north for a long time. I know, and I'm sure, you would have done a business impact study before making this announcement, because that's your government's rhetoric. So could you please provide some more details to the people of northern Ontario? Would you please stand in your place today and tell the people in northern Ontario how many capital dollars you have allocated to this project, and will you stand in your place and assure the people of Sudbury that the bricks and mortar of the medical school you're talking about—one part of it—will be located in Sudbury at Laurentian University?

Stand in your place right now and say "yes" to that question, give us a capital dollar amount, and do you know what? I'll pop the champagne cork.

**Hon Mr Clement:** I'm very pleased to stand in my place today and say that the priority of the Mike Harris government is for more medical students, more family physicians, more specialists for rural and northern areas. That is our priority, and I stand in my place proud of that.

If the honourable member wishes to know what Sudbury thinks of this, I would like to quote Jim Gordon, who is chair of the Northern Ontario Mayors' Coalition and mayor of the city of Greater Sudbury, who said, "We commend Premier Mike Harris and his cabinet for this historic decision. ... Today, I want to thank the province for demonstrating its commitment to northern Ontario.... Having Premier Harris, a son of the north, support this school makes a powerful statement." I couldn't have said it better myself.

#### SMART GROWTH

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The phrase "smart growth" was launched by the Premier in January, and you made an extensive statement earlier today. I guess what I'm looking for is, what exactly will it mean to the people of my riding and our city of Brampton, and who will you be talking to?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** It's a very good question, and I know the member is keenly interested in this. Our vision is a pro-growth plan that builds on the principles our party has had for 40 or 50 years from leaders such as Drew and Frost. They thought more in terms of long-term planning for the province and what we need in terms of infrastructure and policies to attract and maintain growth and, at the same time, improve our standard and quality of life in the province. That's what has made this a great province to live in.



So we're undertaking consultations to implement this vision with a strategy based on what we hear from the people of Ontario around more choices for people, around co-ordinating levels of government in municipalities, listening to their concerns and their solutions, and encompassing that into a strategy that will deliver results.

**Mr Spina:** Minister, you spoke about the phenomenal growth that's been experienced in our area and around Ontario and the projections into the future. Nobody faces the problem of growth more than those of us in the 905 belt, and particularly in Brampton. Members of the opposition talk about what Bill Davis did. He committed Highway 410. The Liberals started it but, like a lot of their initiatives, it was only half finished. In fact, Highway 410 right now is euphemistically referred to as 205 because it's only half finished. The NDP in five years in office never did a thing to it.

So as a result of some of the issues in our area—the incompletion of Highway 410, the choking off of Highway 7—the gridlock is killing the commuters who are coming from Brampton, through Brampton and from Peel to the core of Toronto and back.

How can my constituents' concerns be heard and considered in your plans for Smart Growth?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** It's true that we have experienced a lot of growth under the leadership of Mike Harris because of tax cuts or removing barriers to economic growth and we're seeing some of the pressures that more people and more growth have on a province that hasn't been actively planning for the future since, as you mentioned, the corridor of the 410, planned in the late 1950s, early 1960s, and the 407, planned in the late 1960s, early 1970s. It takes time to protect these corridors and we must think ahead beyond the next election, about 10, 15 years out.

Your constituents should contact our ministry. We will be having regional consultation meetings with myself and with my parliamentary assistant and other members of the government and our ministry. We're opening up a Web site where they can contact and add to the discussion.

The Liberals want to reinvest the urban planners' dream of the 1950s, where experts come in and tell people how and where they should live and what choices they should make. We believe in consulting with ordinary working families of this province to get their ideas on how we, as a government, can work for them in implementing their choice on where they work and what mode of transportation they take and making sure that the infrastructure—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** My question is to the Deputy Premier. I don't see him, though.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock, if you could, just for a quick moment. Here he comes. We'll just give him a second. I think he can hear you now.

**Ms Di Cocco:** Thank you, Speaker. My question is actually quite straightforward, and it is to the Deputy Premier. It's regarding cabinet office. I understand it's the central agency that supports the Premier and cabinet and it also provides administrative support to the office of the Premier and other organizational units.

What I found incredible, and you talk about smaller government, more efficient government, is that the cabinet office costs have more than doubled since 1995. The cost in 1995 was \$7,858,149.00; the cost in 2000 was \$15,816,386.00, and these are actuals. I'd like to know why the operational costs of cabinet office have more than doubled and every other sector of this province has been nickle and dimed to death for the last six years.

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I thank the member opposite for the question. In terms of the size of government, I'm sure the member knows that today in the government of Ontario we have fewer ministers and fewer political staff and at less cost to the taxpayer than in the previous, NDP government. The NDP government had five more ministers, with 15% more staff than we have now. Just before the election in June 1995 the previous government had 29 ministers and 352 political staff, compared to our current 24 ministers with 303 staff.

1510

**Ms Di Cocco:** In 1995, when the Legislature had 130 members, the extra cost for cabinet ministers and parliamentary assistants and the Premier was almost \$752,000. In March of this year, the cost of your cabinet ministers and their parliamentary assistants is \$1,103,488, and we have a smaller Legislature. These are facts and figures. How do you explain one rule for the rest of the province and one rule for your cabinet offices and for your ministers?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** I can tell the member opposite that during the budget preparation process we're in now and the business plan process that all the ministries are going through, we look, of course, at the size of the provincial public service, at the full-time employees in the provincial public service. There will be a budget on May 9 and we'll address some of those issues there, as you know.

In terms of political staff, the NDP in 1994-95 budgeted over \$18 million for political staff. Last year our government spent 27% less than that, even before you factor in inflation. So in terms of political staff, we certainly have instituted substantial savings in the government of Ontario.

#### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** My question is directed to the labour minister and it concerns the school board strikes. Last Friday morning I had a

meeting with four women, four young mothers from my constituency, two of whom are getting near to graduation from Humber College, one in robotics. One young mother has two children. The purpose of their meeting was to come and talk to us about the problems they were facing regarding the closure of the schools, particularly with the Toronto District School Board. They pleaded with me to see if we could come up with a solution, because in the one case—

*Laughter.*

**Mr Hastings:** It may be a laughing member to the member from Fort York, but at least I'd like to know from the minister the specific provisions in the legislation and why we are taking this drastic set of actions at this time, in response particularly to these constituents in my riding.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I thank the member for Etobicoke. We've experienced the same thing in my riding as well. I know members in Windsor and Toronto have expressed the same concerns to me.

Obviously we would rather see a collective agreement. The vast majority of agreements are collectively negotiated. When you're put in a situation where you have people out on strike for four and five weeks and you have closed schools, you have to make a decision. That decision is detailed legislation that orders people back to work.

It can't be a resolution; it can't be a motion; it has to be legislation. You can come into this House with resolutions like the Leader of the Opposition that accomplish absolutely nothing—it is completely meaningless, absolutely no substance at all—or you can act decisively, show some leadership, protect parents, teachers and in fact students, like this government has done, and legislate people back to work to protect the taxpayers of this province, not resolutions which do nothing.

**Mr Hastings:** My follow-up is a supplementary. I implore our friends in the New Democratic Party to look at the crucial nature of what is happening in the Toronto schools and to look at how this is adversely impacting working families in Toronto and in Windsor. Why won't they support this legislation instead of dragging it out for two more weeks? Minister, it may even end up jeopardizing the graduation plans of these two young mothers who want to get back to work in this province.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Obviously the question is spot on; it's exactly right. I remember being in this House when the members of the NDP ordered the Windsor school board back to work without even getting a jeopardy ruling. When they were in government, they didn't worry about getting jeopardy. They just ordered people back to work.

I've been in this House when we got the Liberals across the floor telling us, "We will give back-to-work legislation in Hamilton-Wentworth speedy passage."

**Interjection:** What did they do?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** What does that mean? They voted against the bill when it came here.

You've got to show some leadership in this place. You've got to do the right thing. Sometimes the right thing means legislating individuals back to work for the benefit of parents and students.

To answer you, member for Etobicoke, we need to show direction. We have given that direction. This is not a resolution, it's action. I can only presume, since they promised to support the last bill and voted against it, that they must be opposed to this one and they'll vote for it.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday at the Walkerton inquiry, the former ministry officials clearly identified that after 1995 your government told Ministry of the Environment enforcement officers not to enforce the law. It was shocking to find out that you said, "Back off. Don't enforce the law any more. Don't do any inspections." But what's even more shocking is that you spent \$800,000 on the Gibbons report to try to dress up your cuts to the Ministry of the Environment and make it sound as if somehow it was new policy.

It's pretty clear that the people of Ontario want you to enforce environmental laws and want a Ministry of the Environment that is capable of enforcing environmental laws. What are you going to do to make sure that happens?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** I agree with the leader of the third party. It is extremely important that we have a very strong enforcement presence in Ontario, because it does act as a deterrent to non-compliant industry. I would like you to know that, since 1999, the government has hired more than 130 new enforcement and investigative-related staff to ensure protection of health and the environment. The number of charges laid in 2000 increased by 25% from 1999, and the fines issued in 2000 were more than \$2.6 million, a 74% increase from 1999. We have a new, tough environmental penalties act, and we are moving forward with very strong enforcement measures.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** That's all very well, but seven people died under your watch, and you started to put a little bit of what you took away back into the ministry in 1999.

I want to get back to the Gibbons report. What it says is, "Don't worry so much about prosecuting polluters." It sets the stage to weaken the ministry even further and to privatize our water and sewer systems. It further justifies your plan to cut the environmental budget next month. You even had to bring in an outsider to write this report, because no self-respecting environmental enforcement person at your ministry would do it, given the cuts and deregulation you've done already.

So, Minister, stand up today and tell us you will reject this nonsense of the Gibbons report and build up the budget and the resources in the ministry so it can do its



job and protect the environment and the people of this province.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I'm extremely disappointed that the member would characterize Ms Gibbons in the way she has. She is a highly respected former deputy minister. Her report has been extremely well received. It talks about a new vision for the environment, one where we all work co-operatively in an interministerial manner. It talks about moving beyond minimum standards into continuous improvement. It talks about moving forward with partnerships with all the stakeholders in this province. I can assure you that report will be implemented by our government and you will see there will be tremendous improvements. In fact, we will have the best Ministry of the Environment anywhere.

1520

### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** My question would be best answered by the Premier, but I will direct it to the Chair of Management Board, who was—but there's no one—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Crozier:** Well, I'm not starting it. The Chair of Management Board was here.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. Don't start that stuff. It's a back way of getting around to it. When you start that, you lead on. Just ask the question. You know the ministers are here. You can look across, you can see them, you can say, "He's here, he's here, he's here." So that's the answer. Don't get around it by doing that, because it'll start on the other side. You know you can't mention attendance in here, and I'm not going to put up with it. You got around it the other way. Don't tell me that. I sat here and heard what you said. You were trying to get around to, "I'd like to ask it to the Premier and I have to ask it to somebody else." We know what you're trying to do, and I'm saying to you don't do it or you won't ask the question, because you'll be named. Member for Essex.

**Mr Crozier:** Recently, N. Scott White was appointed as chair of the Ontario Realty Board Corp. Mr White was vice-chair of Colliers International, a multinational real estate firm that donated more than \$30,000 to the Tory party since you came to office.

It seems that Mr White has friends in high places. I asked Mr White if he asked for the appointment. He said, "Blake Wallace was the one who suggested to me and then asked me if I would allow my name to stand for consideration to this appointment." As we all know, Blake Wallace is a well-known Tory insider, friend of the Premier and an Adams mine lobbyist.

My question to the minister is this: why is an unelected, unaccountable party insider like Blake Wallace arranging an appointment that is this important? Is that accountability?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** First of all, there's a real

difference between getting some information on the positions available as opposed to some sort of decision-making, which is not done. That's why there's a process in place where any of these appointees are accountable to a committee of the Legislature, which, I must say, the members of the opposition certainly are part of. They have an opportunity at that time to indicate their concerns, and quite frankly there's a very important process that goes through.

Having said that, if we look at the ORC, the ORC has a mandate right now to bring a lot more professionalism into what they're doing to make sure there's a lot more accountability. Frankly, this is what is happening throughout the whole process, whether it's the pool of qualified brokers through to management. That's why it's very important for this process to be very public. As the member knows, it is very public, and certainly the member knows that the opposition had a chance to ask questions as well.

**Mr Crozier:** When Mr White told us about Blake Wallace's involvement, we were looking forward to asking Mr Wallace directly about his involvement in this process. Unfortunately, after we learned of this involvement the government decided to withdraw his appointment—being Mr Wallace's to the McMichael board—so we wouldn't have a chance to question him.

We on this side of the House believe the government appointments should be given the utmost respect. This means that appointments should not be subverted by individuals who are not accountable to the Legislature, and we know that Blake Wallace has been responsible for at least one appointment but do not know how deep this goes. We've seen the ORC rocked by scandal and cronyism, and this doesn't seem to restore any accountability. I would like to ask the minister to tell us if Blake Wallace has made any other decisions affecting Management Board appointments?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** The subject of the question is Mr Scott White, who went through the process. Clearly there was a process that we all agree upon, all sit upon, all members of this Legislature. It's one thing to be able to hear about a position being available—in fact perhaps the question to be asked, then, is, how did someone like Gilles Morin hear about the position when he was appointed to the Ontario Highway Transport Board, or Bernard Grandmaître, who was appointed to the Assessment Review Board, or Frank Micalash, for another example, who was appointed a full-time member of the Social Benefits Tribunal? I'm sure he heard about these positions from some of his colleagues. I would gather that they didn't have much of a say in terms of the actual decision, other than going through the process of committee, but that's why the process is here. The accountability is clearly to the Legislature; that's why we have the committees. The process is one we all support. Quite frankly, we're talking about Mr White here. Is he concerned about someone who wasn't appointed?

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up.

## INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FINANCING

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. As you know, many of the recreation, culture and tourism facilities in the province are in need of repair, upgrades and even expansion, but for many small communities such as several in my riding the tax base is simply not large enough to fund major infrastructure. People in my riding tell me these facilities are important to them and essential to their communities. What are we doing to protect these facilities that are badly in need of repair?

**Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation):** I want to thank the member for Perth-Middlesex for the question. Not only is he an outstanding Speaker, but he is working hard, obviously, for the constituents in Perth-Middlesex.

I had the chance to visit St Marys, Stratford and Milverton in the member's riding just this past week. He had a tour that he took me on of the Milverton Arena, which is one such project he refers to in his riding, an arena that I think is about 50 years old. I'm pleased the people of Milverton are investing in this new program, the \$300-million sports, culture and tourism partnership, a record, an innovative program of the Mike Harris government to invest in health and safety issues as well as to renew and rebuild our infrastructure and tourism attractions, sport and recreational facilities such as arenas, rec centres, art galleries, theatres etc. The Mike Harris government knows full well, understands and supports the key role these investments will make in communities like those in Perth-Middlesex.

**Mr Johnson:** Minister, as you know, there is a committee of some eight or 10 members in Perth East who have been meeting regularly over the last months, and they were ever so glad to have the opportunity to meet with you last weekend.

I agree that this program will help communities improve some of their most important infrastructure, but I understand that the demand for SuperBuild sports, culture and recreation funding is very high. Some organizations in my riding that have applied to the program are wondering whether they will be successful. Could you inform the House about the process for this particular program? Specifically, my constituents would like to know how their projects will be evaluated, given the demand for funding.

**Hon Mr Hudak:** Not only do I want to thank the member for Perth-Middlesex, but also Mayor McTavish, Grant Whittington, Jeff Erwin and Audrey Nicholson and some other concerned citizens who told me about the importance of this investment to their community. Certainly Milverton, like many others, is very excited about participating in the sports, culture and tourism partnership, the \$300-million Mike Harris investment.

It's open to health and safety issues, as I mentioned, for municipalities as well as provincially important tourism and such attractions. No doubt because of this

excitement the Mike Harris government is provoking in communities across Ontario, there are a lot of people interested in participating. Only the best projects are going to qualify for this program. It's important for the projects to demonstrate the importance to the community, the business impact on the community and the participation of partnerships. Try to be innovative in working with businesses in the community, community groups and municipalities, because we're looking forward to maximizing our investment in Ontario for sports, culture and tourism.

## HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** My question is to the Minister of Health. For the last two years my riding has had bad experiences with privatization of radiology services. DiagnostiCare Inc, the private company from Alberta that bought up and operates these clinics in my riding, is holding our doctors and constituents hostage. In the letters I have here with me today, the company has clearly stated that due to government clawbacks, their bottom line has suffered to the point that they are once again planning on closing down the Rockland, Plantagenet and Clarence Creek offices. That is after having already closed the Alfred clinic. These closures would be disastrous to our communities. Doctors would leave the area. Patients would suffer, as we don't have any public transportation to the larger centres.

I ask you, Minister, what are you prepared to do to ensure that the people of Glengarry-Prescott-Russell are provided with X-rays, ultrasound and other radiology services?

1530

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Certainly I'll take the honourable member's question under advisement. If he can provide me with some details, I'd be happy to do some further research. I can say generally, on a couple of fronts, of course one of the things we have been concerned about and had an excellent dialogue with the federal government on was the state of medical equipment in Ontario. I'm pleased to report to this House that an agreement was reached a few weeks ago with the federal government and money has started to flow in terms of diagnostic equipment and other forms of medical equipment.

In terms of cancer care and its investments, I can again say to this House that the taxpayers' dollars flowing to cancer care investments here in Ontario have multiplied and have increased by more than 40% since the start of our investments in this area as a government. So if there's a particular problem, I'd be happy to deal with it.

**Mr Lalonde:** Since DiagnosticCare bought up these clinics, X-ray services have been reduced, and in some areas ultrasound services were completely eliminated. Due to the lack of public transportation in my riding, I am concerned that many people who require X-rays will



not get them because of their inability to travel to Ottawa. The equipment is not a factor.

DiagnosticCare suggests in their letter of April 2 this year that in order for them to continue operations and also to meet their bottom line, the local doctors in their search for funding should request a subsidy, as it may be more attractive and could then be used as leverage with government to guarantee that radiology services continue in their communities.

I ask you, Minister, do you think this is the way our health services should be operated, with threats? Once again, what can you do to ensure that the people of my riding are provided with these necessary services?

**Hon Mr Clement:** The answer is clearly no, I don't think the health care system should be operated on a series of threats, although that has never stopped some people before. Certainly that's not the way it should go. It should go on the basis of need. It should go on the basis of the best care delivered in the community, and that's what we stand for on this side of the House. That's why for each and every year of the Mike Harris government the health care dollars invested by this government has gone up; indeed it has gone up by 27% over the last five years.

If the honourable member has a particular problem in his constituency, then we can deal with that. But the numbers don't lie. It is clearly an area of the highest priority of the Mike Harris government, and it will continue to be so.

### VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** My question is for the Attorney General. On March 22, the *Globe and Mail* published an article stating that the Law Society of Upper Canada is considering a very disturbing proposed rule of professional conduct. If adopted, this rule would allow defence lawyers to conceal physical evidence relevant to a crime from authorities if it could play a valuable strategic role at trial and if turning this evidence over to authorities would reduce this strategic value. For example, Bernardo lawyer Ken Murray's suppression of videotapes showing the torture of Kristen French and Leslie Mahaffy would become legitimate if this proposed rule of professional conduct were passed.

Attorney General, my constituents in Scarborough Centre are appalled by this and want to know what measures would be taken to seek justice for victims.

*Applause.*

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I thank my colleagues and I thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the member for Scarborough Centre for what is a very important question. I must tell you that I share her concern. It is a very legitimate concern on a very important issue. Frankly, the proposed rule—and I want to emphasize it is a proposed rule—is unacceptable. I expressed that view to the treasurer of the law society and to other senior officials from the law society shortly after the rule was tabled.

Frankly, it's my hope that representatives of the law society will reconsider this matter—I have some indication to believe that they will do so—because it would be inappropriate for this rule to be passed in its current form.

I will say as well, before I take my seat again, that I would encourage all members of the Legislature who have received similar calls from their constituents or—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm sorry, the member's time is up.

**Ms Mushinski:** Minister, I'm delighted to see that you share my view and the view of my constituents that this proposed rule is unacceptable. Since 1995 the Mike Harris government has proven time and again that it stands firmly on the side of victims of crime and their families. Despite the opposition of some groups, some of which of course come from the other side of this House, the Mike Harris government continues to ensure that victims have a voice in our justice system.

Minister, can you remind this House about the important initiatives that the Mike Harris government has adopted on behalf—

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon Mr Young:** Shortly after this government took office in 1995, we came forward with a series of measures, a series of initiatives that were somewhat unprecedented throughout the country and in fact Ontario remains one of the first and only jurisdictions to have passed legislation that entrenches the protection of victims. You will undoubtedly recall the Victims' Bill of Rights which passed in 1995. Most recently we've come forward to entrench and make permanent the Office for Victims of Crime. That office will ensure that that bill of rights is enforced throughout.

In addition, in the last fiscal year, 2000-01, our government is very proud to say that we spent \$135 million on no less than 40 programs, all of which will assist victims across this province.

### NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT SUPPLEMENT

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, every month your government takes money away from the poorest of our children. These children are supposed to get about \$100 a month back from the national child tax benefit supplement, but you've clawed back dollar for dollar from children whose families are on Ontario Works and on the Ontario disabilities support program. This is wrong. That's why I'm leading a campaign to stop this clawback. I'm asking you today to make quick work of my campaign and tell the people of Ontario that you'll stop taking this money away from our most vulnerable children. Would you do that today, Minister?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** This government has done a lot to try to improve the lives of

children in this province. One of the things that we're committed to do is not just to provide supports to help people move from welfare to work, but to do more for those real heroes in our society, those working families with low and modest incomes for whom government has traditionally done very little, to give and encourage an attachment to the labour force. That's why the national child benefit supplement was designed by the Harris government and Jean Chrétien, all 100 of his Liberal MPs. I'm so very pleased to tell you that the member for Don Valley East's mother supports this policy each and every day and she votes for it.

It was designed by the government to encourage attachment to the labour force. Jane Stewart, the Minister of Human Resources Development, said, "What we are trying to do is build a platform so that there is incentive to work." Pierre Pettigrew, the then minister, said, "We are trying to reduce and eventually eliminate the welfare wall. Too many families are in the welfare trap. Families on welfare will never be really rich. It's a job that's key." That's what this government has designed to do, to provide an incentive, to encourage attachment to the labour force.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The time for question period is over.

#### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: notwithstanding standing order 69(a), I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion to consider second and third reading debate of a bill entitled An Act to resolve labour disputes respecting the Toronto District School Board and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District Board.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would then request unanimous consent to begin second reading of the same act immediately following routine proceedings today, in order to begin second reading of that aforementioned bill. 1540

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Considering that there was not unanimous consent, the NDP opposing us on second reading starting after routine proceedings, may I then seek the unanimous consent of this House to begin second readings after the dinner break tonight so we can begin second readings on the bill to put children first and get them back to school.

**The Speaker:** Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, depending on how you feel about it, the House isn't sitting tonight. You need a motion for that.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** OK, we'll start with that. Unanimous—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Wait until I've finished. I'm betting on the answer.

Is there unanimous consent to sit tonight? No. So we therefore can't do it. I heard some noes, unfortunately.

#### AIR QUALITY IN LEGISLATURE

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My point of order concerns the atmosphere in this House in terms of the humidity and the heat. What I would like to request of the Speaker is whether he could ascertain why it is, year in and year out—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Hastings:** If the folks from the New Democrats want to leave, that's their privilege.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I can't hear the member. I did receive a notice that he did want to bring this up; he sent me a handwritten note. To tell you the truth, I thought he was kidding about it. But on a point of order, the member for Etobicoke North.

**Mr Hastings:** I would request that the Speaker undertake an investigation to determine why we cannot have cool facilities in this whole precinct—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Where's my wrench? The member for Niagara Centre on the same point of order.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: If I could be of assistance to the Speaker and to the member, perhaps if you removed your tie and doffed your jacket, you'd be a little cooler and more comfortable.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** It may be the same point of order, I don't know.

**Interjection:** It's not the same.

**The Speaker:** OK. A point of order, and then I'll reply.

**Mr Hastings:** Our friends in the socialist line may consider this a facetious request, but I would outline that we wear ties normally in respect of and for decorum in this place.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Speaker, I just want to seek assistance to let me know if the government's on a filibuster this afternoon. I'm wondering if they're trying to slow the House down.

**The Speaker:** All of you should try wearing this wool robe and see what it's like in here. In fact, I would tell you it has been hot after the last few days, and I got back last night and both my wife and I have a touch of the flu and I actually had a temperature. I thought it was hot in here because of the heat and the wool garments that I wear. It turned out I had a little touch of the flu, so it has been extremely hot.

Having said that, the problem with this system is that we have a very old building. We do, I am pleased to inform you, have—

*Interjection.*



**The Speaker:** Be very quiet so we can hear. I know we're having a little bit of fun, but the member does want to hear.

We do have some plans to improve it, which will be brought in our capital plan, and the member may want to speak to the Board of Internal Economy. It will take some money. If he's not familiar, we will give him the names of the people on the Board of Internal Economy. We have some things that we would like to do in terms of health and safety in this building, but it will take some money to do that.

So I suggest that the member for Etobicoke North speak with the government House leader and the members of the Board of Internal Economy. We also have the capital plan that we can bring in tomorrow at the table if you will come down and take a look at it. I would encourage all members who feel the way I do—this is a lovely, lovely building, a historical building, but it does need some work to upgrade it into the next century. We have some plans to do that, and so I'm hoping that the members of the board will encourage all the members to support the plan.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a more serious matter: in light of the fact that the NDP have not given consent for the government's bill, I seek unanimous consent to debate Mr McGuinty's resolution, which will bring the kids in Windsor and Toronto back to school tomorrow.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? No.

## PETITIONS

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads as follows:

"Whereas many residents of St Catharines and other communities in Ontario are unable to find a family doctor as a result of the growing doctor shortage we have experienced during the tenure of the Harris government;

"Whereas cancer patients in Ontario requiring radiation treatment face unacceptable delays and are often forced to travel to the United States to receive medical attention;

"Whereas many prescription drugs which would help patients with a variety of medical conditions such as macular degeneration, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, diabetes and heart failure are not covered by OHIP;

"Whereas many assistive devices that could aid patients in Ontario are not eligible for funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health;

"Whereas community care access centres have inadequate funding to carry out their responsibilities for long-term and home care;

"Whereas the Harris government has now spent over \$235 million on blatantly partisan government adver-

tising in the form of glossy brochures, television and radio ads;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government of Mike Harris to immediately end its abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising and instead invest this money in the health care system in the province of Ontario."

I affix my signature, as I am in complete agreement with the sentiments of this petition.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I continue to receive petitions from workers and unions regarding cancer in the workplace, and I have more to present today. These are forwarded to me by Cathy Walker, the national health and safety director of the CAW. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this year 130,000 Canadians will contract cancer and there are at minimum 17 funerals every day for Canadian workers who died from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer-causing substances known as carcinogens; and

"Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all cancers have environmental causes and the International Labour Organization estimates that one million workers globally have cancer because of exposure at work to carcinogens; and

"Whereas most cancers can be beaten if government had the political will to make industry replace toxic substances with non-toxic substances; and

"Whereas very few health organizations study the link between occupations and cancer, even though more study of this link is an important step to defeating this dreadful disease;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That it become a legal requirement that occupational history be recorded on a standard form when a patient presents at a physician for diagnosis or treatment of cancer; and

"That the diagnosis and occupational history be forwarded to a central cancer registry for analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation."

On behalf of my NDP colleagues, I proudly add my name to those of these petitioners.

### HORSE RIDING SAFETY

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I've got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas an increasing number of Ontarians are turning to horseback riding as a recreational activity; and

"Whereas many of these inexperienced riders are children; and

"Whereas currently there are no minimum safety standards regulating riding establishments; and

"Whereas coroners' inquests into horse riding fatalities from as long ago as 1977 have called for the mandatory use of riding helmets and boots; and

"Whereas an unacceptable number of preventable injuries and fatalities have occurred while horseback riding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass into law the private member's bill introduced by Tina Molinari, MPP for Thornhill, entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, in order to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used, and to amend the Highway Traffic Act and make it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to ride a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment."

1550

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in 1998 the Mike Harris government forced hospitals in Bancroft, Belleville, Picton and Trenton, Ontario, to amalgamate into the Quinte Healthcare Corp;

"Whereas the fiscal management of each of the aforementioned hospitals prior to amalgamation was prudent, efficient and accountable to their communities;

"Whereas amalgamation and provincial government cutbacks have created a \$5-million deficit for the Quinte Healthcare Corp;

"Whereas any reduction in hospital and health care services in each of the aforementioned communities is completely unacceptable;

"Whereas this provincial government promised to ensure that the effect of amalgamation would not result in any reduction of health care or hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Instruct Premier Mike Harris and Health Minister Tony Clement to provide enough funding to the Quinte Healthcare Corp that will cover the projected \$5-million deficit and ensure that quality health care and hospital services in the long term will continue in Bancroft, Belleville, Picton and Quinte West."

I am in full agreement with this, and I will affix my signature to this petition.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further petitions? The Chair recognizes the member for Hamilton East.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** West.

**The Acting Speaker:** I guessed, and I guessed wrong. I'm sorry.

**Mr Christopherson:** It's a huge difference, Speaker, I want you to know.

### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the ... changes to the Employment Standards Act would permit businesses to force full-time work from 40 hours per week to 60 hours per week, and not pay overtime until more than 60 hours is worked; and

"Whereas these changes will allow businesses to force employees to work longer hours for the same amount of pay per year; and

"Whereas these changes would reduce the quality of life for all Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Ontario government to implement the following changes to the newly proposed Employment Standards Act:

"Reduce the standard work week to 40 hours

"Make overtime pay (time-and-a-half) after eight hours in a day, or 40 in a week

"Enable employees to take vacation days consecutively, and guarantee that half-hour lunch breaks are not broken up into smaller breaks

"Give employees the right to refuse all overtime without reprisal."

I proudly add my name to those of these petitioners.

### PAPER SLUDGE

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of the riding of Durham" and elsewhere in Ontario "have voiced their objections to the storage of paper sludge and related materials within the Oak Ridges moraine;

"Whereas the residents are concerned over the impact of this material on the air, water and soil of the moraine and on the health of those living nearby;

"Whereas this issue has been raised at several public meetings by both individual citizens, members of the Protect the Ridges Coalition and municipal" leaders;

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment is currently completing studies of the impact of paper sludge in the Durham riding;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take whatever steps are necessary to re-evaluate the use of paper sludge in Ontario, including its stockpiling and storage in rural areas, the spreading of this material on farm fields and any other commercial applications for this material," which is Sound Sorb, really. "And that such re-evaluation of this process include consultation with residents in communities where paper sludge is spread, stored or processed. And that the re-evaluation also include whatever technical studies are necessary to fully understand the impact of this material on the natural environment."

I am pleased to endorse this by signing it here today.



## SALE OF SCHOOLS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** This petition is addressed to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas the Hughes Public School at 17 Innis Ave in the city of Toronto closed down and its premises have been declared surplus by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB);

"Whereas the city of Toronto has issued a building permit to the TDSB permitting the reconstruction of Hughes Public School for an entity called Beatrice House, for the purpose of a private academic school;

"Whereas the Beatrice House is not a private school registered with the Ministry of Education, nor a mident has been issued to that organization;

"Whereas within the context of the zoning bylaw (438-86), the subject lands have been designated as R2 Z0.6 and permits a 'private academic, philanthropic or religious school';

"Whereas the TDSB has chosen not to lease the subject premises to a computer training company for \$1.25 million annually. Instead, the board has chosen to lease it to the Beatrice House for a fraction of the current market value;

"Whereas a lease has not been signed between the TDSB and Beatrice House while renovations to the building are underway;

"Whereas local taxpayers' concerns have been ignored by the TDSB;

"Whereas other locations, such as the Brother Edmund Rice School at 55 Pelham Park or the Earls court Public School at 29 Ascot, which are being closed down, have been offered to Beatrice House to no avail;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Honourable Minister of Education investigate the leasing arrangement between the Toronto District School Board and Beatrice House inasmuch as:

"(1) Boards are to seek fair market value when selling, leasing or otherwise disposing of schools, except that the price for the property not to exceed the value of the ministry's grant for the new pupil places when the purchaser is a coterminous board, a provincial school or a publicly funded care and treatment facility offering programs leading to a diploma";

"(2) Boards are to offer the property to coterminous boards and other public agencies operating in the area in accordance with the priority order currently specified in regulation 444/98;

"(3) Toronto District School Board has not dealt in good faith with our neighbourhood residents;

"Therefore, we respectfully ask you to consider our plea for justice. The Toronto District School Board has ignored our concerns and due diligence. We as a community tried everything within our power to fight the glaring and obvious wrong done to us, to no avail."

Since I agree, I'm delighted to sign the petition.

## HORSE RIDING SAFETY

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas an increasing number of Ontarians are turning to horseback riding as a recreational activity; and

"Whereas many of these inexperienced riders are children; and

"Whereas currently there are no minimum safety standards regulating riding establishments; and

"Whereas coroners' inquests into horse riding fatalities from as long ago as 1977 have called for the mandatory use of riding helmets and boots; and

"Whereas an unacceptable number of preventable injuries and fatalities have occurred while horseback riding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass into the law the private member's bill introduced by Tina Molinari, MPP for Thornhill, entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, in order to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used, and to amend the Highway Traffic Act and make it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to ride a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment."

I'm pleased to affix my name to this petition.

## MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING

IMAGERIE PAR RÉSONANCE  
MAGNÉTIQUE

**M<sup>me</sup> Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier) :** J'ai une pétition de la part des commerçants d'Ottawa-Vanier :

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current level of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) services in Ottawa is the lowest of any major urban area in the province and waiting lists for these services exceed 7,000 patients and seven months;

« Attendu que les patients sur la liste d'attente font face à des délais de service qui peuvent être néfastes à leur santé et qui créent de la souffrance inutile en ce qui a trait à leur santé mentale et à leur capacité financière ;

"Whereas Ottawa area hospitals have submitted proposals for increased MRI services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health be directed to take immediate action and provide sufficient funding to resolve the alarming backlog of patients waiting for MRI scans at Ottawa hospitals."

Il me fait plaisir d'apposer ma signature.

1600

## PRIVATE HOME DAYCARE

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas private home daycare in the Day Nurseries Act is defined as temporary care for reward or compensation of five children or less who are under 10 years of age;

"Whereas in rural areas, there is a lack and in great part no public transportation and considering that the population is often far away from centres and schools;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government bring forth the following amendment to the definition of the private home daycare under the Day Nurseries Act which would allow a greater number than five children or less who are under 10 years of age in the rural areas."

I affix my signature to that petition.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

#### DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 24, 2001, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** At the end of my remarks, I am going to be presenting amendments to the throne speech, just to put you on notice.

Last week the Conservatives delivered their so-called throne speech, one of the shortest and vaguest in living memory. In fact, it wasn't a throne speech; it was more like a 20-minute infomercial for a product that fewer and fewer people have any trust in or want to buy.

The government talked about accountability. I say, this government talking about accountability is like the Hell's Angels promoting a drug-free society, because they are the exact opposite of accountable. Where is the accountability in selling off Ontario's hydroelectricity system to the highest bidder? Where is the accountability, when we already know that George Bush and the United States want to get control over our hydroelectricity resources? Where is the accountability for the companies and consumers who will be paying Detroit or Chicago prices for made-in-Ontario power? What about the thousands of workers who will lose their jobs because of the government's foolish plan to sell off our hydroelectric power supply to for-profit companies? Where will they go for redress?

I want to be very clear, because that's one of the concrete things the government mentioned in their throne speech—that they intend to deregulate, privatize, sell off, what has been Ontario Hydro, what is now Ontario Power Generation. I want it clearly understood that, unlike the Liberals who merely want to slow down the government's plan but would allow this disastrous sell-off to continue, New Democrats are opposed to it and we

intend to stop it. We intend to campaign across the province to stop it, because we know that the only way to have accountability with respect to hydroelectricity supplies is to have a publicly run system.

Hydroelectricity is not just another commodity, which the government sometimes says. In the modern world, having a predictable, stable, reasonably priced supply of hydroelectricity is just as essential as oxygen. Electricity is absolutely essential in the modern economy in terms of people being able to operate their computers, light their homes, be assured of a safe food supply, be assured of heat and so on, and it is absolutely essential for many of our main industries in this province.

We not only intend to campaign against this; we will do everything we can to stop the sell-off of what is an essential service in Ontario. We will do everything we can to ensure that we have a publicly run hydroelectric system, and one that is accountable, accountable to a beefed-up Ontario Energy Board which will have the capacity to control and regulate what is happening.

But it's worse than just having a plan to sell off something as essential as our hydroelectricity system. This government also has a plan to privatize our sewer and water systems. In fact, if you read this 20-minute infomercial that they want to call a throne speech, when you read between the lines what emerges is that the government is going to continue to privatize, privatize, privatize.

Its answer to health care issues is to talk while at the same time continuing to turn over more and more of the health care system to private, for-profit operators through the back door. We most recently saw that at the private, for-profit cancer care clinic that is now operating. We now have essentially two-tier cancer treatment in Ontario. Actually it's three-tier: if you're from northern Ontario you can, according to this government, find your own way to the cancer treatment centre, even if you have to drive five, six or seven hours and pay out of your own pocket; if you're from a few select places in southern Ontario and you need cancer treatment, the government will pay your way there. It'll pay your taxi, your airfare, your food, your hotel, everything. Now we see the third tier: a private, for-profit cancer treatment clinic which, we're going to see, will be available in the not-too-distant future to those who have the money to be able to afford to pay. That's where this is headed.

Water: the privatization of water. I want to talk just for a minute about what happened in Great Britain. This idea of privatizing water, of turning our drinking water and the supplies of water that we need in our home every day over to private, for-profit companies for distribution, is not a new idea. This is very much one of Margaret Thatcher's ideas. But I want people across Ontario to reflect on what happened in Britain after the Conservative government there privatized, sold off, the municipal water systems.

What happened is that private companies immediately jacked up the water rates so that people found themselves paying double, triple the amount to get safe water in their homes. What also happened is that those private



companies substantially reduced the number of people out there who were doing maintenance on the water lines, the people who were ensuring that the water plants ran properly. So at both ends of the scale people ended up paying more to get water and yet they found they were dealing with a less and less stable, less and less predictable water supply system. Now, if you had money, you could pay more. But what happened to all kinds of lower-income families was that their water was simply shut off. Imagine, in the 21st century, when we should know that one of the prerequisites to having health as a human being is to have safe drinking water, the Conservative government allowed private companies to go around and shut people's water off.

The second thing that happened in lower- and modest-income neighbourhoods was that the companies really let their maintenance of the water system decline, and people in those lower- and modest-income neighbourhoods noticed a similar decline in the quality of their drinking water. Imagine, in the 21st century, when we know that this is so linked to our health, to our capacity to ward off diseases, to our capacity to have a healthy immune system, a government that says it cares about accountability that would sell of something as essential as the water supply. How do you get accountability out of that? If you have money, you can have accountability; you just pay more, and you get it. But if you don't have money, if you live in a lower- or modest-income family or lower- or modest-income neighbourhood, there is no accountability; you're simply told, "You don't have the money, you don't count."

People need to realize that is this government's strategy for our own water system here in Ontario: to turn it over to private operators where there will not be any accountability. If you have money, you'll be able to get safe drinking water. If you don't have money, you're at risk or your water gets disconnected. Something so essential, something as essential as safe drinking water, this government is prepared to abandon, to abandon all accountability.

It was quite stunning yesterday to read the accounts from the Walkerton inquiry about what happened, the fact that this government, when they came into office in 1995, after cutting the number of inspectors and enforcement officers, literally then said to the remaining inspectors and enforcement officers, "Don't do the inspections and don't prosecute. Don't prosecute against our corporate friends when you find them polluting."

Incredible. This government calls that accountability? In what is supposed to be one of the most democratic countries in the world, people have a right to know that their very natural and physical environment is being protected, and yet we had a government issuing the order, "Don't inspect and don't prosecute the polluters." Where is the accountability there? That, to me, sounds like negligence that could result in people dying, and unfortunately in this case it did.

1610

What would I advise the government to do? Instead of furthering the privatization of our water system, instead

of furthering this neglect, pass the Safe Drinking Water Act that my New Democratic colleague Marilyn Churley has brought here to the Legislature. Pass that act, put the standards in place and then put the inspection officers and the enforcement officers in place to ensure that people will receive the safe, clean drinking water they deserve.

I called the throne speech an infomercial for a discredited product, and nowhere is this truer than in the critical areas of health and education. Our health care system no longer meets the needs of Ontarians because this government has no other plan for it than, as I said, to continue privatizing it as much as possible through the side door. I simply want people to reflect on what's happened in the last six years.

Six years ago, home care in this province was being provided by community non-profit agencies, organizations like the Red Cross, like the Victorian Order of Nurses. They were organizations that were based in the community. You knew who was on the advisory board. You knew who it was who was responsible for handling Red Cross fundraising and for doing other Red Cross activities. You actually knew the people who were responsible for the delivery of home care in your community. Now, six years later, six years after this government, home care is overwhelmingly in the hands of private, for-profit corporations, many of them American private, for-profit corporations. If you try to phone them, even, in your community, you don't have a phone number. You don't know where to get in touch with them.

Moreover, these companies are not accountable. Yes, they're accountable to their corporate board and they're accountable to their shareholders, but they're not accountable to the very people in the province who need access to that very important part of health care: home care. Where is the accountability in that?

Then we have what's happening in long-term care. Almost all of the new long-term care beds that have been awarded by this government—they say "awarded"; I would say the long-term-care beds that are due the people of this province—have in fact been turned over again to private, for-profit corporations that are more interested in how much money they can make out of long-term care beds or nursing home beds, more interested in how much money they can make, and less interested in the quality of care.

If you want illustrations of that, look no further than many of the scenarios that have happened in the United States. Many of these corporations are American corporations. In fact this government has handed home care and long-term-care contracts over to companies that, in the United States, in a number of situations have been charged with respect to health care fraud in that country.

Where is the accountability in that? As I say, there is no accountability for the average citizen. There is only accountability in terms of the people who own these corporations, in terms of the people who intend to make money off the illness and health insecurity of our citizens. That is not, in my view, the kind of accountability we want.

With respect to the private, for-profit cancer treatment centre at Sunnybrook hospital, we've asked the government for the contract. The government says that they care about accountability, that they want to be an accountable government. Then you should be prepared to show the people of Ontario this contract the government has signed with a private, for-profit company that is going to operate the cancer treatment centre. It just seems to me that's as essential as A, B, C. This is government money, this is taxpayers' money that is going through the government of Ontario into the hands of this private, for-profit corporation. I think cancer patients, the families of cancer patients, the citizens of Ontario have a right to know how much they are being paid, what the bonuses are, what the acceleration clauses are etc. How much public money is going to this private corporation when cancer patients across this province are increasingly forced to deal with an insecure situation?

The other part of privatization that's happening is the delisting at OHIP. People need to know that this government has delisted over \$100 million a year in OHIP services. Services that used to be covered by OHIP, as a result of this government's activities, are no longer covered and people will have to pay for that to the tune of \$100 million a year out of their own pockets. Where is the accountability there? Where is the accountability when you go behind back doors with the Ontario Medical Association and you delist medical services and you don't even tell people about it? You then force them to pay for it out of their own pockets. That's not accountable government.

We have said for some time that the government should pass the patients' bill of rights that we presented in 1998 and have presented over and over again. It would provide for a number of accountability measures. It would provide for the kind of machinery that would not only hold the Minister of Health accountable, but would hold hospitals accountable, would hold physicians accountable and would hold homes for the aged accountable. It would give us the kind of accountability mechanism that works well in a publicly funded, publicly administered, efficient health care system.

The government doesn't do that. Instead, they continue to turn health care day by day through the side door, the back door, over to their corporate friends. What does this mean for the average citizen? What it means is this—in fact we're seeing it. The government says they're spending more money on health care, but the citizens of Ontario are getting less health care and lower-quality health care. What the government is proving by its course of action is what we already know from the United States, and that is, health care delivered by private, for-profit companies costs people more and delivers less health care. That's what's being proven in Ontario today, that private, for-profit delivery of health care will cost people more, but at the end of the day people will get less health care and a lower quality of health care.

Then there is the situation in our classrooms. This government in some ways is like a child playing with

matches. They've created a firestorm in education and then they blame everyone else for what's happened. They themselves refuse to be held accountable. They themselves refuse to answer any questions. Whenever something goes wrong, they point to the teachers, they point to the board of education, they point to the trustees, they demean the students. But we have never had so much conflict, so much bad feeling in our schools and in our education system going back over the last 50 years as we've had in the last six years. Where is the accountability in that? Where is the road to a better education system?

No one would suggest that you can improve the health care system by mounting a six-year war against doctors. No one would suggest that. But what we've seen here is a government that has waged a six-year war against teachers, against the support staff in our schools, against principals and vice-principals, against trustees. You can't possibly improve our education system by conducting a six-year war against the very people who work very hard and are very dedicated to our education system and our schools, yet that's what this government has done and they refuse to be accountable for it.

The cutbacks in adult education, the tuition increases in terms of post-secondary education: all these things have created serious problems in our education system.

1620

Then we have the problem of early childhood education. This government has announced and re-announced and re-announced their so-called Early Years project at least five times in the last two years, and yet no one can find any evidence of it. Oh, yes, sorry. We did find some evidence of it. We found that the government was pressuring the local health unit to hire a Conservative party hack who knows nothing about early childhood education, who knows nothing about the learning environment for young children. The government was trying to lobby, to push a local authority to hire a Conservative party hack to head up the Early Years project in the community. That doesn't say much for the Early Years project. It says, in fact, that the government wants to use it as a way to hand out patronage jobs to its unqualified supporters, and not look for the best people who can provide the best kinds of strategies and plans for our children. That's the only evidence we've seen of the so-called Early Years project by this government.

I've spoken about three or four things that touch people—the folly, if I may, of following California in terms of the sell-off of the electricity system. People in Ontario need to know that three years ago, this government was saying that what they were doing in California was the right thing to do. This government was saying that privatization and deregulation of hydroelectricity in California was going to lower the electricity rates. This government was saying that Ontario should copy California. That's all on the record. It's here in Hansard.

Now we see the folly in California. We see that people's hydroelectricity rates have gone up and up and up, doubled and tripled, and they're going to go up even more in the next six months. In spite of paying double



and triple the amount for electricity, people still face a summer of brownouts and blackouts. On top of that, we see the California government having to bail out these private energy corporations that this government is so in love with, to the tune of \$10 billion. We see the people of California calling on their government to re-establish control, to re-regulate the electricity system.

I think this government should be listening to what's happening in California now, not repeating the follies of what was done in California three years ago. I pointed out to the Minister of Energy today that once they sell off 65% of the electricity generating capacity in Ontario to these international energy companies, in other words, sell off 65% of what was the old Ontario Hydro—I said to the minister, “Do you think they’re going to want to sell the power here for the prevailing cost in Ontario, or don’t you think they’re going to want to sell it in New York at 123% more or sell it in Chicago for 60% more or Detroit for 60% more?” That’s how the private market works.

Private companies, when they get control of electricity, are not going to be concerned as to whether my lights are on or my heat is on or my computer works. They’re going to be concerned with one thing: how much money can they get for the electricity? They will get more money by taking electricity that’s produced here in Ontario and selling it in New York, Chicago and Detroit. I said to the minister, “What are you going to do when that starts to happen?” His basic answer was, “Well, we’re going to establish rules that will require them to sell it here in Ontario first and sell it at the appropriate price.” That’s what California tried to do. After they privatized and deregulated the electricity system and the rates started going through the roof, they then came back and said, “We insist that you sell it at a lower price and we insist that you sell it here in California.” The international energy corporations simply thumbed their nose at the government and the people. That’s why they got into such serious blackouts, brownouts and a shortage of electricity.

It seems that this government has learned nothing from the experience there. They simply want to repeat it. Once again, what is “accountable”? What is the definition of “accountability” that would cover a scenario where a government wants to sell off something so essential as the electricity system that people need to organize their lives?

There are some other things that I don’t think anyone can justify, that yet this government continues to do. We’ve seen this government come in and do away with rent controls. At the same time, they did away with any attempt, any strategy to ensure there is affordable housing in Ontario. I could take you out and I could find five developers today who will tell you they are not interested in building affordable housing. They are in the development industry because they want to make a lot of money, and they make money by building houses and by building apartment condominium units for people who have high incomes. That way they can make a higher profit. They are not interested in building housing for lower-, modest- and even middle-income families.

So we have a crisis happening now in every city in Ontario, and it’s even starting to move into small towns, where people who do not have high incomes cannot afford a place to live, and those who do have a place to live are literally one paycheque away from losing the apartment they have, from losing the roof they have over their heads. Where is the accountability in following that strategy? It seems to me that housing is essential. You can’t organize your life for work, you can’t organize your life for education, you can’t organize your life for training, you can’t organize your life for anything if you don’t have a roof over your head or if the roof over your head is so insecure that you’re worried you might lose it next month. But that is the strategy this government has chosen. It’s selling off the existing bank of affordable housing and it has no strategy to build new affordable housing. This is a crisis that is literally going to grow worse and worse by the week.

Since the death of rent controls, we have seen rents escalate. I’m not talking about the doubling of rent; I’m talking in some cases about the tripling of rent. An apartment that used to rent for \$500 a month is now \$1,500 a month. That is not unusual at all in a city like Toronto or Ottawa or Hamilton or even a city like London. It’s not even unusual now in a smaller city like Peterborough or Guelph. Those things are happening. What is “accountable”? What definition of “accountability” covers a government doing that kind of irresponsible thing?

You know, we have a new 60-hour workweek in Ontario. The government passed the legislation just before Christmas and then, as I understand it, on July 1 they’re going to proclaim the law in force. The government’s line is that the only people who would be forced to work a 60-hour workweek would be those workers who agree in writing with their employer. In other words, the employer would have to come to the worker and say, “I want you to work a 60-hour week the next three weeks. Will you sign on the dotted line?” The government would have you believe that somehow they’re going to be nice, polite agreements.

Put yourself in the place of a new Canadian, someone who has come to Ontario, who perhaps does not speak English that well. This is their first job in Ontario, and the boss walks up to them and says, “You’re going to work 60 hours this week and you’re going to work 60 hours next week, and the week after that I’m going to want you to work 60 hours as well, and I’m not going to pay you overtime.” Do you think that worker, who just got a job, who doesn’t speak English that well, who is new to our province and new to our country is going to jump up and say, “I demand my rights. I’m not going to work 60 hours”? Of course not, because they know that if they refuse to work the 60 hours, they won’t have a job next week, or they will not have any opportunity for promotion.

What the government doesn’t want people to know is that they’ve also got away with the entitlement of workers to two weeks of vacation taken together.

1630

Under the old Employment Standards Act any worker, any non-unionized worker in the province, had the right to say to an employer, "I want to take my holidays over these two weeks. I'm letting you know that I want my holidays over these two weeks," and they would get two weeks of holidays in consecutive days.

The government has done away with that. In fact, an employer can now come to that same employee and say, "I will let you have one day of your vacation next week, I'll let you have one day of your vacation two weeks from now, I'll let you have one day of your vacation five weeks from now, and seven and nine and 11." Goodbye, family vacation; goodbye, opportunity to spend any time with your children, with your spouse. How incredibly inhumane, how incredibly destructive of family life.

But this government says, "Oh, no, it'll never happen that way, because the employee would have to agree." Imagine a young worker fresh out of college or university. It's their first job. The employer comes along and says, "By the way, you don't get two weeks of vacation. You get to take your vacation days one day now, one day next month" etc.

The government would have you believe that young worker is going to jump to his or her feet and say, "No, I refuse." It's not going to happen that way, because that young worker, in the insecure context they're in, is not going to do that. They're simply going to be pushed over, and they'll fall into line. It is quite destructive.

I don't think any of these things can be deemed accountable. I don't think any of these things can be covered by any definition of accountability. They are irresponsible in terms of people, they're irresponsible in terms of their working lives, they're irresponsible in terms of people's capacity to house themselves—totally irresponsible.

But I'll tell you, this government's corporate friends will make a lot of money off this. Imagine an employer who can schedule his employees for 60 hours this week, 60 hours next week, 45 hours the week after and 15 hours after that, and then avoids having to pay overtime.

That's the other thing that is part of this Employment Standards Act. The overtime hours are now averaged, so despite the fact you've worked 60 hours, you've worked very hard, you get no overtime pay. That's a lot of money taken out of a worker's pocket and that's a lot of money in the pockets of this government's corporate friends. That's what's really happening here.

I want to present to the Legislature an amendment which points out in very specific terms exactly what this government has not done and is lacking in accountability, and what they have done which is so irresponsible and negligent and lacking in accountability. I just want to say to people that we, as New Democrats, are going to struggle to put forward to people a strategy for affordable housing. As New Democrats, we're going to continue to put forward for people a strategy for clean drinking water and a clean environment. We're going to continue to put forward a strategy for child care and early childhood

education and a strategy on how we can not only protect the medicare system we have but in fact improve it and enhance it. I talk about medicare because the lesson of this government is that medicare is more efficient, more effective, more fair and balanced in terms of delivery of health care than any of the private, for-profit machinery this government and its corporate friends are trying to inflict on people now.

I want to read the amendment. It reads as follows:

"The leader of the third party moves:

"That the address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by striking out all of the words after 'We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislature Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled,' and substituting the following:

"deprecate the Tory government's intention to sell Ontario's secure public electricity provider to the highest bidder, while it squanders the education of our children and bankrupts our health care system; and

"Whereas this government caters to its big business friends in the corporate, for-profit energy sector, shields polluters from public scrutiny and inflicts sky-high rate hikes on vulnerable electricity consumers; and

"Whereas this government has ignored its own report, abandoning school-aged children by failing to provide extracurricular activities; and

"Whereas this government allows special interest groups like the Ontario Medical Association to dictate health care policy that favours pay raises for doctors instead of ensuring province-wide access to publicly funded health care services provided by salaried medical teams; and

"Whereas this government continues to recklessly endanger the environment by slashing the environment ministry's staff and budget, risking the security of Ontario's water supply; and

"Whereas the Conservatives condemn low-income families to living in unsafe, unhealthy, overpriced housing by failing to build affordable housing and by removing rent controls; and

"Whereas this government forces people to work 60-hour weeks in order to keep their jobs;

"Therefore this House rejects the Tories' "accountability" agenda and demands that the government apologize to Ontarians who have suffered chaos in their schools and hospitals, inequality at their workplaces, and unsafe water and air. The House demands that the government maintain a publicly owned electricity supply and abandon its agenda to privatize water and sewage systems. It demands that the government reform primary care and competitive bidding practices and restore quality, publicly funded home care services in Ontario. This government must cease its attacks on the poor by ending the 60-hour workweek, by raising the minimum wage immediately to \$7.50 an hour, by ending the clawback of the federal child tax benefit, and by investing in safe, affordable, licensed child care services for working families."



**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The leader of the third party moves that the address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by striking out all of the words after—

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would dispense, if I could; I cannot—the words after “We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled,” and substituting the following:

“deplore the Tory government’s intention to sell Ontario’s secure public electricity provider to the highest bidder, while it squanders the education of our children and bankrupts our health care system; and

“Whereas this government caters to its big business friends in the corporate, for-profit energy sector, shields polluters from public scrutiny and inflicts sky-high rate hikes on vulnerable electricity consumers; and

“Whereas this government has ignored its own report, abandoning school-aged children by failing to provide extracurricular activities; and

“Whereas this government allows special interest groups like the Ontario Medical Association to dictate health care policy that favours pay raises for doctors instead of ensuring province-wide access to publicly funded health care services provided by salaried medical teams; and

“Whereas this government continues to recklessly endanger the environment by slashing the environment ministry’s staff and budget, risking the security of Ontario’s water supply; and

“Whereas the Conservatives condemn low-income families to living in unsafe, unhealthy, overpriced housing by failing to build affordable housing and removing rent controls; and

“Whereas this government forces people to work 60-hour weeks in order to keep their jobs;

“Therefore this House rejects the Tories’ ‘accountability’ agenda and demands that the government apologize to Ontarians who have suffered chaos in their schools and hospitals, inequality at their workplaces, and unsafe water and air. The House demands that the government maintain a publicly owned electricity supply and abandon its agenda to privatize water and sewage systems. It demands that the government reform primary care, end competitive bidding practices and restore quality, publicly-funded home care services in Ontario. This government must cease its attack on the poor by ending the 60-hour workweek, by raising the minimum wage immediately to \$7.50 an hour, by ending the clawback of the federal child tax benefit, and by investing in safe, affordable, licensed child care services for working families.”

1640

The Chair recognizes the member for Kenora-Rainy River and I apologize for reversing the names in your riding before.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** Mr Speaker, you’re getting pretty good at my riding name. Thank you, I do appreciate that and I’m sure the people in my riding appreciate that as well.

I am very pleased to stand in this House this afternoon and join in this debate on the speech from the throne. Last Thursday—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gill:** It’s pretty warm here. I just came in.

Last Thursday, April 19, our government kicked off the new legislative session with a plan to protect and enhance the economic progress we’ve made under the Mike Harris government. We call it, obviously, 21 steps into the 21st century. It lays out the most important measures we as a government will take to ensure Ontario’s growth and success: 21 new major initiatives; 21 new sets of promises. But I think it’s fair to look back on the promises we’ve already kept to date: 166 tax cuts for jobs, work for welfare, removing barriers to growth and so many others. Ontarians know our government keeps its promises.

We sit only blocks from Toronto city hall. In recent weeks Toronto city council has set new records for avoiding hard decisions, passing the buck, petty behaviour and mindless irresponsibility. At the same time, we are only an hour’s flight to Ottawa. In our national capital, the federal government arrogantly grows fatter and more irresponsible each day. The federal government is kept in office by the evil miracle of the vote split and also by the sinister skill of panicking our more vulnerable citizens. All the while the business of the federal government drifts aimlessly and Canadians suffer.

What a relief for Ontario taxpayers to have here at Queen’s Park a government that listens to the people and a government that delivers results. Our government at least is up to the job. The Harris government has the drive and courage to set priorities and stay focused on those priorities, to speak about what the people of the province are interested in and to build for prosperity today, tomorrow and decades into our future.

Ontario has a history of building infrastructure for a long-range timeline. I call it foresight. We are committed to making tough decisions on the issues of today, like the school strike. We know the Harris government is the party to have the courage and credibility to do the right thing, as we have done today.

My heart goes out to all the parents, students and teachers whose lives have been disrupted by the Toronto strike, and the ones in Windsor as well. Like many parents, I’ll be happy to see this strike end and the sooner the better.

It’s for every parent and child in Ontario that I’ll be voting for the throne speech. The throne speech protects jobs, keeps families financially secure and ensures Ontario remains strong. Our government’s vision is the people’s vision. There’s no doubt that we are a govern-

ment which is committed to act in the best interests of all Ontarians, not just the special interest lobbies.

When it comes to showing leadership, this government has been there. Take quality health care, for example. It is one of the greatest benefits that we enjoy living in Ontario. It is also one of the biggest challenges faced by this government and all other provinces in Canada. Since 1995, the Mike Harris government has worked hard to modernize and improve our health care system. We took strong steps toward fundamental reform of the system, improving our hospitals, investing in long-term care, community-based services, health promotion, nursing and mental health programs.

At the same time, this government has increased spending dramatically over the past few years to ensure quality services are delivered.

We worked hard, but we haven't been alone. It's been with the help of Ontario's hard-working people—doctors, nurses, hospital staff—that this government has achieved health care improvements. I would like to pay tribute to those people today, who are the ones saving lives, healing the sick and keeping us healthy. Our government has committed in the throne speech to consult all caregivers, as well as patients and others, on how to spend our health care dollars wisely and efficiently.

Our government will increase health spending for the sixth year, but more money alone is not the answer. Our health system is in need of fundamental reform if it is to provide the care Ontarians deserve and need. We are committed to reform and we have been doing it for the last six years. It is time that the federal government recognize this fact and start to change its own methods of funding and control. Ottawa has established a national health care commission and we urge them to give it the freedom to consider everything from the ground up. We are also urging them to explore all solutions to the sustainability challenge we face in health care.

Our health care reforms are a work in progress, but we can already see their positive effect on a local level. Residents in my riding, Mr Speaker, as you said so eloquently, the riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, can certainly see those benefits. Less than a year ago, a site in my riding at Bramalea Road and Bovaird Drive was selected as the site for a brand new hospital building in Brampton. It will replace the too old, too small building that presently serves Brampton, known as the Peel Memorial Hospital, or now known as the William Osler Health Centre. The new hospital will be part of the William Osler Health Centre group, which also operates hospitals in Etobicoke and Georgetown.

The new facility will provide improved services, the most up-to-date technology and allow the hospital to recruit the very best doctors and nurses to continue providing quality services to all residents of Brampton. Many more of my constituents will be able to receive the care they need right in Brampton instead of having to travel all the way to downtown Toronto. With Brampton's fast-growing population, it is vital that health care reforms continue.

People in my riding tell me that while they're concerned about health care, they also want our government to keep their taxes down. That is why I am proud to support Premier Harris when he reaffirmed his commitment to keep cutting taxes. Tax cuts are creating jobs. They are helping people get off welfare and they're enhancing our standard of living.

I often remind myself that there's no such thing as the government's money; it is money belonging to each and every Ontarian. The throne speech renews our commitment to the hard-working taxpayers of our province. This government recognized that public institutions like municipalities, hospitals and schools consume a large percentage of your tax dollars, but there has been little reporting back to the taxpayers as to how these institutions spend your money. Our government plans to introduce amendments to the Audit Act, and these amendments will ensure that organizations funded by tax dollars use our money effectively. We will ensure dollars intended for specific programs are not diverted away from their intended purposes.

It is important for us to recommit ourselves to controlling the expansion of government. The throne speech commitment to sell businesses that government should not operate and assets that it should not own is welcomed by residents in my riding.

The throne speech outlines our commitment to all Ontarians. This government has worked hard to move our province away from those days of weak leadership, big spending and high taxes, not to mention big deficits and a skyrocketing debt.

The speech from the throne was an excellent step toward keeping Ontarians on the right track. I'm very proud to support the 21 major initiatives outlined by this government.

**1650**

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? The Chair recognizes the member for Davenport.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I was before him.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry. What did I say? Did I not say Davenport?

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Davenport.

I was very happy to listen to the comments by the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, but I want him to know that on this side of the House we're not here simply to criticize you. I think we're here to do this constructively, but there's one thing the member should know. He's not in Ottawa. This is Ontario. We're in Toronto. Simply to be critical of the federal government on a consistent basis does absolutely nothing to improve conditions here in our city or in this province of Ontario.

Secondly, let me put it this way: the member says his government is listening to the people and consequently acting upon their demands. If I'm permitted to ask him one question, has this government listened to the people when they said to you, "Open up the hospitals you shut down"? What has happened is that as soon as you took



over the reins of government, as soon as you had control over our hospitals, they were shut down—surely, not all of them, but some of them. Where my residents are in the west end of Toronto, they felt they were not only left out of the decision-making process, but left out in the cold because when the emergency vehicle arrived and took the sick to an emergency ward, we know what happened: the hospital ward was full and wouldn't take the patient.

I say to the member, is that the way you say you're listening to the people and is that the way you're going to act in terms of being sensitive to their demands and requests? That is no way, for sure, to try to overcome the problems we have in the city of Toronto.

**Mr Bisson:** I listened intently to the comments from the member on the other side and I fail to see why a member would be a proud of what the government is doing, for example, around the issue of Hydro.

I represent, as do other members in this Legislature, a part of the province where there are a lot of industrial users of hydro. I look at what this government is doing vis-à-vis the deregulation and privatization of Hydro. We know that within the next year there's going to be about a 20% increase in hydro costs to the utility users across the province. That's both residential and industrial. For companies in my riding, like Falconbridge mines, Tembec, Columbia Forest Products, Abitibi-Price, and the list goes on, that 20% increase on top of the already 300% increase they've had in natural gas prices because of deregulation in the gas sector, is really a job killer. This government by way of its policies is going to take away one of the underpinnings of our economy.

One of the ways this province has been successful over the years and one of the ways we've been competitive compared to the United States and other jurisdictions is by providing cheap, affordable electrical power at cost and a very sustainable system.

**Interjection:** That's out the window.

**Mr Bisson:** It's gone. You guys stand in this House and have the gall to say, "We're proud of our economic development agenda." Do you realize what you guys are doing to the industries of this province by deregulating and privatizing Hydro? My friend from Sault Ste Marie, Mr Martin, has Algoma Steel right now going through a massive restructuring—a huge utilizer of hydro. You stand there and say you're proud your government is going to allow a 20% increase in the first year, and God knows how much when it goes into the private sector. Compared to what happened in California and Alberta, I say it's a recipe for disaster. This government is about killing jobs, not about creating them, when they go ahead and try to follow an agenda of privatization of Hydro. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I certainly enjoyed the presentation put forward by the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale in response to the throne speech. It certainly was very detailed. A lot of good information was had in that presentation.

I was rather disappointed to hear some of the comments just recently being made by the member for Timmins-James Bay, talking about the privatization of Hydro. You know, it was during their term that the debt mushroomed. I thought when we were campaigning in 1995 we had a debt of Ontario Hydro more around the \$33-billion or \$34-billion mark. Now I find out, after we've paid down \$3 billion to \$4 billion, that it's at the \$38-billion mark. This is after we started checking the books and finding out where all that debt really was.

He's talking about making a mistake on privatization. I don't think, with the kind of escalation that we had in electricity costs during their term here in the province of Ontario—a very, very serious error obviously was being made, and the direction that we're going is certainly a healthy one. We have lots of production of electricity here in the province of Ontario; more coming on from both Bruce and from Pickering, as well as something like upwards of 30 different producers and generators are also coming on stream that are building new plants.

Here's an opportunity for green power, and green power is being produced in the province of Ontario, whether it be from solar power or from wind power. This is something their government could have been doing. But while they were in office, the ones who talked so much about the environment and the good things about environment—they acted so little; they acted rarely. Here would have been an opportunity for them to have brought forth the production of green power and blended that in with what Ontario Hydro was indeed producing.

I again compliment the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale for an excellent presentation.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** Again we heard today the member talk about a number of initiatives, but they've neglected one word, and that's the word "agriculture." That just shows the contempt of this government for the second-largest industry in this province.

The throne speech made no mention of the word "agriculture." The member's speech made no mention of agriculture. The parliamentary assistant to agriculture didn't mention the word "agriculture." I think that's a sad day for this province, that the second-largest industry is totally neglected in the 21-point plan of this government. It is very clear that the Harris government has no regard for the province's second-largest industry. Despite being elected in 1995 on a promise of no cuts to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, it has done a complete about-face in the past five years, slashing this vital ministry by over 50%.

The reference to the zero per cent increase in budgeting of government ministries in the throne speech shows very clearly that again the budget of this important ministry has been flatlined. This throne speech did nothing to alleviate the growing fears that this ministry is being transformed into one driven by a rural affairs agenda, leaving out the historic agricultural roots of its mandate.

Number 7 of the 21-point action plan makes a vague reference to support for economic development and growth in rural Ontario, the north and other sectors. But do you know what? This government doesn't grasp one single fundamental point of the equation, that there's no way you're going to have a strong rural economic component—that if you don't have a strong and vibrant agricultural community, the rural economy is not going to be there. There is no commitment to agriculture by this government. You've abandoned the farmers of Ontario and you should be ashamed.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Gill:** I do appreciate all the various members who took part in this debate. You know, there was a discussion on hydro and hydro rates, about the cheap, affordable power that we had. This member forgets that cheap, affordable power was coming from subsidized rates. That's where the \$38-billion deficit comes in.

1700

Last weekend I had the pleasure of visiting the Napa Valley, which is a great part of California. I talked to some of the people there. I talked to some of my friends there, about if they are suffering or what their problems are. I can guarantee you that the people I talked to at least are not suffering. The truth is, the state of California did not produce any power for the last 10 years. There have been people opposing power production. I am very happy to say that in my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale there is a company, which I will leave nameless for now, that is going to be spending C\$1 billion building 800 megawatts of power, and they are very close to starting production. If this was not a lucrative business, they would not be doing it.

One of the members opposite talked about hospital closings. Yes, we went through hospital restructuring. In my own riding, we combined the Peel hospital along with Etobicoke and Georgetown to make the William Osler Health Centre. That means we cut out a lot of fat, a lot of administrative overhead, and the hospitals are happy and working very well. At the same time, instead of closing the hospital, we're building one of the biggest hospitals in my riding, close to 716 beds. We are very proud of our record.

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to have the member for Brampton Centre give his 10-minute speech at this point.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent for that change? Agreed?

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Speaker: I just want to be clear that we are also going to have questions and comments after the 10 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker:** That's part of the consent. Is it agreed? It is agreed. The Chair recognizes the member for Brampton Centre.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to continue this portion of the debate. I don't mind the questions and answers

afterwards particularly, even though if we were to share our time you would only have had one round, but now you'll have two kicks at the cat, as it were.

**Mr Bisson:** And what a cat to kick.

**Mr Spina:** Yes, and we're happy to do that.

I'm very proud of the structure and tone of the throne speech that took place this past week, because this is the launch pad, this is the direction in which this government will be going over not just the next two or three years but also the next five to 10 or 15 years. We have to think ahead as to what we want in this province to be able to leave a legacy that will be good for our children and our grandchildren, for those of us who have children and grandchildren.

We have to be cognizant of the growth that has to be coupled with the fiscal responsibility we must have as a government. The growth in the economy, growth in jobs remains and must remain the priority not just of this government but of all governments. It is essential to protect the gains that have been made and to ensure the prosperity that has been experienced by us, not just in this city and in this province, but indeed in this country. We have to continue to remove the barriers to jobs and investment, and growth will then continue to happen.

This government will honour its pledge to cut taxes to create more jobs as well as removing the barriers to jobs. A new business impact test being created by the Red Tape Commission is in fact the key element that would be applied to proposed regulations and legislation that could possibly impair our ability to attract investment and jobs. I was very pleased that this business impact test was created by the Red Tape Commission, started by the former Chair, Bob Wood, followed through when I was co-chair, and now being carried forward to ultimate fruition by Steve Gilchrist from Toronto.

A new task force will measure and monitor this Ontario productivity, the competitiveness and the economic progress compared not just to other provinces but to the US jurisdictions and the G7.

The member for Dovercourt talked about closed hospitals and so on in this province—

**Mr Ruprecht:** It's Davenport.

**Mr Spina:** Davenport. I apologize. I was thinking of the fellow you defeated, who was from Dovercourt, right? Both honourable members. In any case—

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** You got the better Tony.

**Mr Spina:** Yeah, I got the right Tony.

I want to indicate that where the HSRC restructuring commission recommended the closure or conversion of hospital facilities as acute care centres, it was really looking at the fact that some of these centres were underutilized. You talk about the deferral of emergencies. Well, when I look at one ward on University Avenue or at St Joe's Health Care Centre being diverted and you need an extra three to five minutes to get to another emergency ward, hold that up to some of the rural and more suburban areas. As my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale indicated, in Brampton we have



one hospital facility. Granted, it was merged on an administrative basis with Etobicoke and Georgetown, but it was still and remains one hospital of less than 400 beds. Forty-four per cent of our caseload goes elsewhere. If we end up in an emergency room diversion, it's not a three-to-five-minute ride, it is a 15-to-25-minute ride. So it's critical that the resources that were saved in under-utilized facilities go to places where they are desperately needed.

We talked about growth in this province, and the minister talked earlier today about investment on Smart Growth and the population of this province—

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Stop the clock for a minute, please.

I want to introduce to the members some very special guests we have in Ontario today. I would ask that they please stand up when I say their names, even if I don't pronounce them very well. These are visitors from Estonia, and they are visiting the Ministry of Education. I'd like to introduce them; they're in the member's east gallery.

I want to introduce the Honourable Tonis Lukas, Minister of Education; Levi Sher, deputy mayor of Tallinn; Valeri Korb, head of the city council of Kohtla-Järve; Imre Liiv, mayor of Narva. The Estonian delegation is accompanied by Robert McConnell and Peeter Mehisto. We welcome you to our Legislature this afternoon.

I apologize to the member for Brampton Centre for interrupting, but they have other commitments and I wanted to do that before they left. Thank you very much.

**Mr Spina:** I'm very pleased to allow the break in my comments to welcome these distinguished guests to our country, to our province and particularly to our Legislature. Even though we have comments back and forth, as you can see, we are all colleagues and we do our best to represent our constituents in the way we see fit.

I was speaking about health care and the growth. What we experienced in Brampton was a municipality that many years ago was growing under amalgamated regional governments of 1974. Because of that positive step made by the Davis government, we experienced phenomenal growth, and in 1975 when I moved to Brampton it was a wonderful town of 75,000 people. I thought, "I could live in this town" because it reminded me of where I was from, which was Sault Ste Marie. It was about the same size as the Soo, so I was very pleased that this was a community that I would be comfortable to move to.

1710

Brampton now, 25 years later, is breaching the 310,000 mark. We had one hospital then, with about 500 beds. There was a reduction in beds during the Liberal reign, although the minister of the day, Elinor Caplan, whose son is a member today, had agreed to give us a new hospital at the time. The proposal went forward in 1988-90 for a new hospital to add to the Brampton hospital, even though some beds had been closed to control some of the costs.

The infamous 1990 election campaign was called, and what happened was that the Rae government took over,

and the interesting fact was that somehow this proposal for a new hospital for a vastly growing area was lost. I can only presume that maybe politics had something to do with it. I don't know. Two Liberal members in a riding now where the government was NDP, but I wouldn't want to cast any negative aspersions in saying that they forgot perhaps where the need really was and there were other priorities. It was ironic, and I think it happened in other communities, from what I understand.

Well, here we are, folks. We are now in the year 2001. Former Minister of Health Witmer announced that finally, after breaching a 300,000 population base, we will get a new 700-and-some-bed hospital. But in the meantime, we have to be able to address the growing needs of the existing health care needs of the city as it stands, because it doesn't take a couple of months to build a hospital, it takes three to five years. I'm very happy to say that this government is moving forward to assist the existing facilities and expand the existing facilities in Brampton, in Mississauga and other places around the province to be able to meet the needs of our health care requirements.

In conclusion, I'm very pleased that we are moving ahead with the smart growth program, because that will put dollars where and when they are needed in this province on a planned basis. That's the objective of Premier Harris. That is the objective of this government. That is the strategy of this party for the betterment of the future of our people.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Sometimes time constraints don't allow members to speak on as many subjects as they would like, and I know the member wanted to address the shortage of ophthalmologists in the Niagara region. As he would be aware, we have an insufficient number of ophthalmologists. Therefore people are being asked by the Ministry of Health now to travel down the highway to Hamilton to get their eye care. The medical experts in Hamilton say, "We're already full and backed up, so we really can't take on the people from the Niagara Peninsula." It's also inconvenient for the people of the Niagara Peninsula.

I know the member as well probably wanted to talk about the problem of a lack of doctors, a shortage of family physicians and specialists throughout the Niagara Peninsula. One of the things that we didn't look at as a society, and certainly the government has not in the last six years it has been in power, is the age of the present doctors and the fact that as they are getting older they are retiring, some are passing on, others are moving. As a result, we have a genuine crisis in the Niagara region for people who require the services of a family physician or certain specialists such as ophthalmologists and dermatologists, and there are other specialties as well.

This is obviously a problem that is not simply confined to the Niagara region, but since I represent that part in the Legislature, I thought I should raise it time and again in here so that perhaps the member can assist me in persuading the Minister of Health of the need for some

pretty comprehensive action on the part of the government to ensure that residents of St Catharines and the surrounding area in the Niagara Peninsula have sufficient family physicians, have sufficient medical services, have sufficient specialists to meet the needs of a population which is significantly older on average than the rest of the province. I welcome the member's assistance in bringing that to the attention of the minister.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I want to maintain this focus on Niagara region. You heard from my colleague the member for Timmins-James Bay, who made reference to Sault Ste Marie and the impact of your sale of, privatization of, deregulation of Ontario Hydro based on the California-Alberta models, and the fact that your management of hydroelectricity in this province is going to result in huge electricity cost increases for every single homeowner in this province, regardless of their income, regardless of whether they're low-income retirees, low-income workers, people on social assistance. It's going to result in the same incredible electricity cost increases for small businesses, as well as for large, like those industries down in Niagara region that rely so heavily on electricity: places like the Carborundum, places like Atlas Steel in Welland, places like the foundry at General Motors in St Catharines.

The fact is, you are driving heavy industry out of this province. The Conservative government is driving heavy industry out of this province: heavy industry, value-added manufacturing, with the significant wages that they pay their workers. Yes, job destroyers. Oh, you speak of your job creation, but for every four or five minimum-wage jobs, seasonal jobs, part-time jobs, temporary jobs, \$6.85-an-hour jobs that you create, you destroy 20 industrial, value-added manufacturing jobs.

You are ripping the heart out of communities like Thorold, St Catharines and Welland and communities like them, industrial communities, good communities, communities of hard-working people. You're ripping the heart out of them with your deindustrialization of this province. It's yet another attack by virtue of spiking electricity costs in this province.

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** My apologies to my colleague from Northumberland. I listened with great interest to my colleague from Brampton. He is, of course, a very strong advocate for health care in his community and, indeed, a strong advocate for northern Ontario in various capacities he has had over his time in the Legislature and someone who was born up north originally.

Like him, I'm very concerned about health care. I've been working very closely with the Queensway-Carleton Hospital and Tom Schonberg, the president, and Michael Gaffney, the chair of the board there, where we've been working to get an increase in their budget. We got \$11 million in recent weeks to help them close the gap, and we're going to continue to work with them on those important issues, like my colleague in Brampton has, no

doubt, with the 400-bed hospital in his constituency that he raised.

I know he would have wanted to talk about agriculture, but he only had 10 minutes. I know in my riding that's a big issue.

**Mr Peters:** He mentioned the word "agriculture."

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Farmers were very pleased with the \$90 million of support, particularly to the corn producers, whom I know I've met with a number of times. We're going to continue to work to ensure that agriculture, which even in my home community—the member opposite will be surprised to learn that in the city of Ottawa we've got more farms than any city in North America the size of our new city of Ottawa. In my constituency, we've got a lot of grains and oilseed farmers, a lot of corn producers, dairy farmers. I know the member opposite would have wanted to talk about agriculture being one of the cornerstones of the Ontario economy, as I often do in caucus and in cabinet.

1720

We've got to continue to ensure that we don't place all of our eggs in the manufacturing sector or in the basket of high technology. Agriculture, agri-food, food processing and the value-added jobs that come from it are incredibly important to the province of Ontario. We've got to continue to ensure that the economies of rural and small-town Ontario, places like Metcalf, Burritt's Rapids and Richmond, remain viable so they will continue to create jobs, hope and opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Peters:** It's a real pleasure to hear somebody on the other side actually mention the word "agriculture," and somebody representing an urban riding, because part of the problem in this province is that we don't—I certainly would hope you will be very supportive of the Minister of Agriculture around the cabinet table.

In regard to what the member said, he talked about issues—

**Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** Talk to the federal Liberals.

**Mr Peters:** I've talked to the federal Liberals more than your own members have. Let's talk about some of the issues.

The member talks about all these wonderful things about health care, but he doesn't address the issue of the doctor shortages that exist all over this province. We've got representatives from the University of Western Ontario here today. The University of Western Ontario has raised its tuition for medical school by 40%. It has raised it for its first-year admissions to \$14,000. That isn't being addressed by this government. The shortage of nurses in this province isn't being addressed by this government. There's still a tremendous shortage of nurses out there in this province.

There's an issue that's particular to my riding that I would hope the Minister of Health and the members so concerned about health would speak to. A report has just been completed on the Mennonite community in my



riding. The Mennonite community is a unique population in southwestern Ontario that is drastically underserved. I would hope the Minister of Health would recognize some of the shortages and issues that face that community.

But let's talk too about accountability. It's been four months since we've sat in this Legislature, yet we have a Premier who during those four months, instead of being on a golf course, could have been travelling around this province doing that same road show he's doing now, but of course he chose not to. He chooses to avoid coming to the Legislature and being accountable to the citizens of Ontario. We're not seeing that accountability from this government.

I'm also very disturbed that there's no clear commitment to an Ontarians with Disabilities Act by this government: a promise made, a promise broken by Mike Harris.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Brampton Centre has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Spina:** Thank you, members from St Catharines, Niagara Centre, the Minister of Community and Social Services and, with due respect, the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London, although I take his comments probably most to task.

The Premier tracked more mileage in the four months that we were not in this House than I would suggest your leader did.

**Mr Peters:** Where? In Florida?

**Mr Spina:** You talk about accountability in finances. Why don't you check the expenses? That will tell you where the Premier has been on behalf of the residents and citizens of this province. That's the consultation, because he was out talking to the people of this province. He will travel this province from Cornwall to Kenora, from Ottawa to Windsor, and I'll put his travel record, talking to the people of Ontario, up against your party as a whole at any time. That will be the challenge.

I want to tell you about the doctor shortages and nurse shortages. We put money into adding more medical health spaces to the universities of this province than anybody has in the last eight years. Check those figures. That's where the dollars have gone. There's going to be a new doctor facility in northern Ontario. Everybody, including the ministers from the opposition parties when they were in government, talked about the medical school they were going to put in northern Ontario. You know what? We put our money where our mouth is. There is going to be a medical school in northern Ontario and it's going to be bricks and mortar. In addition to that, it's going to have a satellite unit with another university: two service facilities for doctors and nurses in northern Ontario. That will work. That's what happens. That's what we do. This government puts its money where its mouth is and delivers to the people of this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** May I first indicate that I will be sharing my time with the member from Davenport.

I'm very proud that I'm here representing Algoma-Manitoulin, a constituency of about 86,000 square kilometres. I saw our visitors from Estonia, and I suspect that Algoma-Manitoulin is many square kilometres larger than the country of Estonia.

**Mr Ruprecht:** About eight times.

**Mr Brown:** My friend says it's about eight times larger than Estonia. So it's a very large and important piece of real estate in this province. It's a constituency that stretches from Killarney to Manitouwadge and Hornepayne, from Chapleau and Missanabie down to Meldrum Bay in the south. Having been out in the constituency for those four months, I know well what the concerns of the people are. They're economic concerns. We have Algoma Steel in Sault Ste Marie, but the constituency of Algoma-Manitoulin completely surrounds Sault Ste Marie. Many of the folks I represent either work at Algoma Steel or are beneficiaries of some of the contracts; \$150 million worth of services and goods are bought by Algoma Steel every year. It's important, and the people in the constituency are obviously concerned, as the restructuring goes on, that Algoma Steel will come out of this as a vibrant and important part of the economy. The economy of all of Algoma and certainly all of northern Ontario, I dare say all of Ontario, would be severely impacted by a bad result at Algoma Steel in Sault Ste Marie.

I would also tell you that Algoma-Manitoulin is one of the large producers of wood products. Members would know, at least members should know, that the market for softwood lumber is extraordinarily weak at this time. That means we have shifts that have been cancelled at a number of our mills. We have an ongoing strike at the Domtar plant at Nairn Centre which I am assured is aggravated by the fact that the supply of softwood lumber in the North American market is too high for the demand and that there isn't as much incentive on the part of many people as there should be to settle this. Those are causing grave difficulties in the constituency. I did not hear a word in the speech from the throne delivered last Thursday that addressed any of those concerns.

Last evening I had the opportunity at an event to be speaking with an assessment lawyer. That's maybe one of the interesting things: you meet people at these events. He told me that Bill 140 and the seven or eight preceding assessment bills in this province should more properly be entitled the assessment lawyers' pension act, because they are providing just an absolutely huge amount of money to assessment lawyers as folks and companies in this province fight their way through the assessment problem.

I wanted to bring that up because we have one particular situation in the constituency that I think all members would be appalled at. In Bill 140 there was a provision regarding the assessment of hydroelectric dams. That provision had the effect on the township of Michipicoten, the town of Wawa—many members would know—of reducing their revenue for municipal purposes by 44%; 44% of this municipality's revenue evaporated

with Bill 140. The government has said that they will offset this loss in revenue and that the municipality will not suffer because of the drop in assessment. The government, however, has not indicated to the municipality how that will happen.

Mr Speaker, you know something about municipal councils, and you would know that at this time of year you are trying to set a budget. You would know that you have to understand how much revenue you actually have and when it will flow. To be in a position where the municipality of Michipicoten does not know when or if the 44% of their revenue is coming causes more than grave concern in that particular municipality.

1730

I have written to the minister on several occasions—to the former minister, Mr Eves, and then to Mr Flaherty—and received an assurance that everything will be fine. We do not know, however, whether or not the money will actually flow. I think it's incumbent upon the government to resolve these kinds of issues immediately. It is unfair and unwise to put a municipality in a situation where almost half their revenue is gone and they don't know when they will see redress for that.

There is also a redevelopment by Great Lakes Power. I want to help my friend from Timmins-James Bay. He should know that Algoma Steel actually receives its electricity not from Ontario Hydro, but from Great Lakes Power.

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr Brown:** It probably does, but the main reason I mention that is they have a dam they're redeveloping in the High Falls area that will obviously increase the assessment of Great Lakes Power in the area quite considerably. The good folks in Wawa are wondering, seeing as that's announced, if they will receive an offset in revenues from the provincial government to reflect the increased value of this hydroelectric facility near Wawa.

One of the issues I think we all wanted to hear resolved is the northern health travel grant. I myself have presented petitions from thousands upon thousands of constituents. They signed them in Meldrum Bay, they signed them in Dubreuilville, they signed them in Elliot Lake, they signed them in Blind River, they signed them in Iron Bridge.

Thousands of people are concerned, and they're legitimately concerned, because we know that access to quality health care is something all Ontarians need to have. We know that in northern Ontario a large impediment to receiving that care is the distances our patients and their families have to travel to get that care.

To have a situation where a travel grant is worth a huge amount more if you happen to be going from the south to the north, rather than from the north to the south, offends every northern Ontario person. The whole northern travel grant system is cut into by the total unfairness, by the fact many families can't access the care they need because of the distances involved.

Manitouwadge is about a four-and-a-half hour or five-hour car ride in good weather from either Thunder Bay or

Sault Ste Marie. That is where those patients have to go. If you're a senior in Manitouwadge, it costs real money to get to the specialist in Thunder Bay or Sault Ste Marie.

For the government not to address this problem in the speech from the throne is offensive to all northern folks and, I assume, all Ontarians. When you represent a constituency that is eight times the size of some European countries, you would understand the problems we have with accessing this care.

I have quite a number of other issues, but I don't have quite the amount of time, so I will at this point relinquish the floor to my friend from Davenport.

**Mr Ruprecht:** I want to thank my friend from Algoma-Manitoulin for passing on part of his time to me. I want to assure you at the same time, Mr Speaker, that we're not here simply to criticize, that we want to be as constructive as we possibly can be, and sometimes that is reflected in the fact that we vote with the government.

The reason I support Dalton McGuinty as leader of the party, as leader of the Liberals, is very simple. On a continuous basis, Dalton McGuinty reminds us that we want to be co-operating, that we want to be not just critical, that we want to be constructive. That's one of the great attributes this man has. That's why I'm a firm believer in our Liberal principles and a good follower of his.

But at the same time, while we want to be constructive, it is clear that when the government makes a mistake, then it's incumbent on us to hold the government accountable. Isn't that true? I know you want to be held accountable because otherwise we would not be doing our job.

The first critique has to be made: it is true that when this government took office, one of the first things it did was to fire nurses. OK, they didn't fire them, but they cut back in terms of the money. Then they said, "Sorry, we've got no money, you've got to go."

**Interjection:** They fired them.

**Mr Ruprecht:** It's the same thing as saying, "Let's fire them." That was a mistake, but to this day I have to hear either an apology or at least a thought of saying, "We were wrong; maybe we should look at this again," or have the nurses been all rehired again because we need them so desperately? We chased them out and now we want them back.

Why? Simply because some bureaucrat or some smart kid in the back of the Premier's ear was saying, "You know what we should do? We should cut back and we should save some money."

The point is simply this: when criticism is granted, it should be taken in the spirit in which it is provided. I only hope that later on, when the government has an opportunity to respond, I might even hear an apology if they are so big as to give one.

In any case, let's look at the second point I want to make today. The good people of Davenport are asking me, "How come that when my mother or my father or my kid is being picked up by an emergency vehicle, there is no hospital in that area?" There used to be one. It was



called Northwestern General Hospital. Today, it's shut down.

Why? Is it because the good people of Davenport, or the west of Toronto, moved out? Is it because there's been an exodus, or is it simply because the health care providers did a better job and the hospital is no longer necessary, or maybe the numbers of people dropped off in terms of not being able to get the health care they needed? No. The point is simply this: we want to save money; we want to cut back.

I don't want to get into the issue of why we want to save the money. I don't want to get into the issue that we want to help some people in terms of the tax cut and the downloading. I don't wish to talk about that today. What I wish to talk about, because there may be just one opportunity here, is to put some sense into why this was done, because to this point the people of Davenport still do not know—there are more hospitals in the west end that were shut down—specifically why this specific hospital, Northwestern, was shut down.

Mr Speaker, I know it would be tough if your family were to be picked up by an emergency vehicle and it had one place to go, one hospital, and that hospital was full, and that hospital said, "The emergency ward is full. We cannot take you. Please, drive with your loved one to another hospital." What would you do? Of course, you'd go like crazy to the next hospital. Again, that hospital said, "I'm sorry, we're full. Go to the next hospital."

Now some people might say I'm over-dramatizing, but I'm not. We have the exact number of days in the west end of Toronto where this happens, day after day, certainly in the year 1998-99 on a number of occasions, and this is simply unacceptable to Ontarians.

We're saying to this government, look again. I know you're spending more money now on health care, to be fair. I'm at least to some degree convinced you're trying to do the best you can under the circumstances. But to some degree you must accept the responsibility that you were wrong. Some of the tax cuts, where you were shifting the money around, were wrong because they have led us into an area that is unacceptable to Ontarians: firing nurses and closing hospitals—

1740

It isn't only firing nurses and closing hospitals. The third item also happened in the west end of Toronto, which I represent, and that is closing schools. I know the government will say to me, "We didn't close any schools directly." No, but you can close almost anything by cutting off the money supply. So the Toronto District School Board said, "We're forced to close these schools because the government took out almost \$1 billion in Ontario. I hear no government members saying, "No." I hear nothing from the government benches. Almost \$1 billion is taken out of the education program and not a peep from the government benches. They're just following the Pied Piper right into cutbacks.

I know that some of the members over there, who are having a good time right now, also have had experiences of school closures and cutbacks. I know they've had that.

They've had to deal with them in the way I would have to deal with mine, I guess. But the point is that this did not have to take place. The reason this did not have to take place is simple: the funding formula was wrong. I'll say it again: the funding formula was simply wrong. If the funding formula had been changed, we would not be faced with as many school closures as we are today.

To give you one example—Mr Speaker, you were in the chair; you recognized me earlier—today I read a petition from hundreds of irate residents who were stuck with a closed school. What to do next? Do we give it off? Do we provide it to some corporation who can come in and redecorate the place? Do we sell it to another school? In this case, the Toronto Catholic school board wanted to buy that school, and the Toronto District School Board did not want to sell it to them or give it to them. Instead, they gave it to someone else. The point is that all of this was not necessary, because if the funding formula for the Toronto District School Board had been changed, we would have been saved. We would not have had conflicting problems, and our community would not have been at war.

That's my second point: the community would not have been at war. This government has struck out in terms of pushing people into confrontation on a continuous basis. There isn't the idea of, "Let's all sit down together and try to work it out." No. That's not what this is all about. "Let's go in and fight and push them to the limit." The government has pushed the business sector in the west end of Toronto to the limit where they have no choice but to get out, man the barricades, throw up their signs, close their businesses and demonstrate. That's the only way this government, even to some degree, began to listen. Why? Because they knew they were wrong. They knew that with a new agenda, a lot of businesses would have had to close. That was dramatic.

So for the first time in the history of Toronto we've had hundreds of businesspeople going out and demonstrating and showing the government, "We're going to revolt because of your specific projects. If you don't cut the taxes, we're going to shut our businesses, we're going to go to Queen's Park and we're going to start a revolution." That was the only way this government began to open its ears and make some changes. So I say, stop the confrontation and start the co-operation, because that is what the people demand.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Bisson:** For that party to talk about consistency, I think, is a bit galling. After we saw what happened in this House this afternoon, where they voted in favour of an issue on a voice vote but opposite when it came to an actual recorded vote, I don't know. I don't even want to go there. I just think it's kind of something.

I want to comment on the comments by my colleague from northern Ontario, Mr Brown. One of the things he talked about—and he's right—is the whole issue of what's happening in communities across this province when it comes to the cost of doing business in Ontario,

and specifically hydro. Where we're at now is that we've got a government that has decided blindly on an ideological principle that all it wants to do is privatize hydro because that's the ideologically right-wing thing to do. They're not looking at the practicality of what's going to happen.

We know what the California and Alberta experiences have seen. Not only have they had energy shortages in California and are heading that way in Alberta, but it's also been an issue of price. We've got a 100% increase in price in Alberta as a direct result of both deregulation and privatization, and in California it's even gone above that. So I say to myself as a person from northern Ontario, where I understand that the cost of doing business is substantially higher because of the transportation costs and energy costs in the north, that whenever a government moves a way of making energy costs higher, it's going to be a job killer.

I say to this government that if it's serious in its throne speech about doing something to create jobs and strengthen the economy, it would seem to me that this government would try to strengthen those things that are the underpinning of our economy. Hydro was developed as a basis of delivering cheap power at cost on a reliable system. That's what it did for a number of years. We already know that privatization is leading to a 20% increase. For companies like Falconbridge, Abitibi and others, it's going to be a real problem economically. It will be a job killer.

**Mr Galt:** I was listening very attentively to the members from the Liberal party making their presentations, and I think the member from Timmins-James Bay was sort of summing up their inconsistency very well. It's rare that I'm able to agree with something that comes from the NDP caucus, but certainly the recognition of their speeches and their actions—consistently inconsistent. All I can say is that they're typical Liberals, and what else would you expect other than that?

I heard the member from Hamilton East talking about the education formula. Just imagine if the education formula hadn't come in—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Galt:** Did I get the wrong riding?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Galt:** Your riding, anyway. Sorry, I did get the wrong riding. My apologies.

**Mr Ruprecht:** It's Davenport.

**Mr Galt:** Davenport. Thank you.

You were talking about the education formula and the situation we're in. Imagine the situation we'd be in if we didn't bring in that education formula. Do you remember what municipal councils and seniors were calling for in the 1970s, 1980s and the early 1990s? "Stop that spiralling education tax on our property." It was spiralling out of sight. If we hadn't brought in the education formula, if we hadn't frozen that education tax, imagine where it would be today.

I want to comment quickly on the member from Brampton East and his comments about hospitals and

how he had a promise in their area from the Liberals and it didn't happen. We never got a promise from the NDP. I can tell you the Trenton Memorial Hospital had a promise from the Liberals. They had a promise from the NDP. Neither government came through with a hospital until our party took government in 1995. Shortly thereafter, a new hospital was approved and, lo and behold, a new one was built. I can tell you I was very proud to be part of that opening last November.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** Je dois féliciter le député d'Algoma-Manitoulin pour ses paroles en réponse au discours du trône de jeudi dernier. Notre député a dit vrai : actuellement, ce gouvernement a complètement failli encore une autre fois. Il a complètement oublié de toucher les familles à faible revenu, les familles qui doivent se rendre au marché du travail à tous les jours.

Une des choses les plus importantes dans le secteur rural est tout d'abord l'énergie, l'électricité. Nous avons quelques industries majeures dans notre région, mais actuellement, avec la déréglementation avec laquelle le gouvernement veut procéder, sans aucune garantie aux Ontariens et Ontariennes, le prix de l'énergie peut augmenter de 20 %. Là, on parle seulement de l'hydro, mais si je regarde au gaz naturel, nous parlons des augmentations qui peuvent aller jusqu'à 51 %. Je vais vous donner un exemple.

Actuellement, tel que mon collègue d'Algoma-Manitoulin a mentionné, nous avons une industrie dans notre région à l'Orignal, Ontario, qui emploie plus de 700 employés. Actuellement, sa facture d'hydro est au-delà de 25 millions de dollars par année. Avec 20 % d'augmentation à ce que nous avons déjà, analysez l'augmentation que nous allons voir : 5 millions de dollars d'augmentation par année. Est-ce qu'on va pouvoir continuer à être compétitif ? Je regarde le gaz naturel : la même chose, 51 %. On nous dit qu'il dépense au-delà de 4 millions de dollars par année, donc à 51 %, on parle d'un autre deux millions de dollars.

**1750**

Mais la chose qu'on a oubliée de regarder aussi : l'éducation dans le secteur rural. Actuellement, la formule de financement que nous avons en place est complètement en dehors de la route. Quand je dis « complètement en dehors de la route », on ne peut pas venir en aide aux institutions scolaires dans notre région, dû au fait du manque de fonds nécessaires pour administrer comme nous le devons. Une autre fois, nous avons failli.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions.

**Mr Kormos:** A few moments ago I commented on the incredibly disastrous impact that this government's huge increase in electricity rates is going to have on heavy industry down in Niagara, on places like General Motors, Atlas Specialty Steels in Welland, the Carborundum factory—and that's after the Niagara region has been gutted as a result of this government's policies and its failure to respond to the crisis in heavy industry in southern Ontario.



It's been during this government's helmsmanship that Gallaher Paper—gone; Union Carbide—gone; layoffs at General Motors; the risk of a reduced workforce at Atlas steels. These are major employers, and the loss of industry and the failure of this government to respond has created disasters for those communities down in Niagara region—Welland, Thorold, Pelham, St Catharines—as well as for the families that supported themselves by their hard work in those industries.

Let's talk for a minute about apartment dwellers down in Niagara region. Many of them tend to be senior citizens. Many of those apartment buildings tend to be electrically heated. Why? Because electrical heating is far cheaper to install. I don't approve of that, but it's far cheaper to install for the operators building these apartment buildings and then renting them out and trying to maximize their profits. We all know it's incredibly expensive now to heat your home with electricity. The people who live in those apartments down on Denistown, just down the road from my house, those four tall buildings, know it's incredibly expensive come winter months with electric heat, as it has been. This government's going to impose huge new costs on them, many of them senior citizens. Don't you guys understand what you're doing to these folks, to these senior citizens, to these hard-working young families that are struggling as it is? How low do you expect them to turn the heat? Good God. Have you no shame? Have you no interest in the voters of this province?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Algoma-Manitoulin has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Brown:** I first want to thank the members for Timmins-James Bay, Northumberland, mon ami le député de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell and Niagara Centre for their consideration.

I want to tell you, it is amazing to me that the government laid off 10,000 nurses or more, spent \$400 million providing severance packages for those good folks, and then tells us there's a shortage of nurses in this province and that they're restructuring. Remember, we restructured health care in this province under you guys two, three, four years ago—the famous hospital destruction commission. It was your plan for health care that's on the rocks. It's your plan that is providing health care that is nowhere near what it was 10 years ago in this province. Just ask yourself, is health care better in the province of Ontario in 2001 than it was 1990? The answer is, "Obviously not." Is education better in 2001 than it was in 1990? There is not a hope that that is true.

The government has continued its flimflam marketing junket. I just received in my office, and I think all members will, a living legacy kit. Did we get that? I wonder what that cost. I have beautiful CD disks. I don't know how many. It could be a gold record, I guess. There are pamphlets with Mike Harris's name on them. It's wonderful.

This was just a marketing effort. Let's govern this province and make working people better off.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being almost 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 am tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1756.*

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## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

**Mercredi 25 avril 2001**

### **PREMIÈRE LECTURE**

<b>Loi de 2001 sur les programmes de santé et de sécurité pour étudiants, Projet de loi 9,</b> <i>M. Gravelle</i> Adoptée .....	102
<b>Loi de 2001 sur la prescription des actions,</b> Projet de loi 10, <i>M. Young</i> Adoptée .....	102
<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur l'observation du jour du Souvenir, Projet de loi 11,</b> <i>M. Wood</i> Adoptée .....	102
<b>Loi de 2001 sur la sécurité des cavaliers, Projet de loi 12,</b> <i>M<sup>me</sup> Molinari</i> Adoptée .....	103
<b>Loi de 2001 sur le retour à l'école (Toronto et Windsor), Projet de loi 13, <i>M. Stockwell</i></b> Adoptée .....	103
<b>Loi de 2001 sur le Mois de la sensibilisation aux tumeurs cérébrales, Projet de loi 14,</b> <i>M. Wood</i> Adoptée .....	103
<b>Loi de 2001 sur une obligation accrue de rendre compte en ce qui concerne les nominations à la magistrature, Projet de loi 15,</b> <i>M. Wood</i> Adoptée .....	104

### **PÉTITIONS**

<b>Imagerie par résonance magnétique</b> <i>M<sup>me</sup> Boyer</i> .....	121
---	-----

### **DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE**

<i>M. Lalonde</i> .....	136
Débat présumé ajourné .....	137

# CONTENTS

Wednesday 25 April 2001

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Small business community</b>	
Mr Sergio .....	99
<b>Northumberland economy</b>	
Mr Galt .....	99
<b>Education labour disputes</b>	
Mr Bryant .....	99
Mr Stewart .....	101
<b>Cutbacks</b>	
Mr Marchese .....	100
<b>Horse riding safety</b>	
Mrs Molinari .....	100
<b>Parkinson's Awareness Month</b>	
Mr Levac .....	100
<b>Ontarians with disabilities legislation</b>	
Mrs Bountrogianni .....	101
<b>Conestogo dam</b>	
Mr Arnott .....	101

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on government agencies</b>	
The Speaker .....	102
Report deemed adopted .....	102

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Student Health and Safety Programs Act, 2001, Bill 9, Mr Gravelle</b>	
Agreed to .....	102
Mr Gravelle .....	102
<b>Limitations Act, 2001, Bill 10, Mr Young</b>	
Agreed to .....	102
Mr Young .....	102
<b>City of Elliot Lake Act, 2001, Bill Pr4, Mr Brown</b>	
Agreed to .....	102
<b>Remembrance Day Observance Amendment Act, 2001, Bill 11, Mr Wood</b>	
Agreed to .....	102
Mr Wood .....	102
<b>Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, Bill 12, Mrs Molinari</b>	
Agreed to .....	103
Mrs Molinari .....	103
<b>Back to School Act (Toronto and Windsor), 2001, Bill 13, Mr Stockwell</b>	
Agreed to .....	103
<b>Brain Tumour Awareness Month Act, 2001, Bill 14, Mr Wood</b>	
Agreed to .....	103
Mr Wood .....	103

## Greater Judicial Appointments

<b>Accountability Act, 2001, Bill 15, Mr Wood</b>	
Agreed to .....	104
Mr Wood .....	104

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Smart Growth</b>	
Mr Hodgson .....	104
Mr Clark .....	105
Mr Smitherman .....	107
Mr McMeekin .....	107
Mr Hampton .....	108
<b>Education labour disputes</b>	
Mr Stockwell .....	106
Mr McGuinty .....	106
Mr Hampton .....	107

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Education labour disputes</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	108
Mrs Ecker .....	108
Mr Kennedy .....	109
Mrs Ecker .....	109
Mr Marchese .....	111
Mr Stockwell .....	111, 114
Mr Hastings .....	114
<b>Hydro rates</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	110
Mr Wilson .....	110
<b>Northern medical school</b>	
Mr Gravelle .....	112
Mr Clement .....	112
Mr Bartolucci .....	112
<b>Smart Growth</b>	
Mr Spina .....	112
Mr Hodgson .....	113
<b>Government spending</b>	
Ms Di Cocco .....	113
Mr Flaherty .....	113
<b>Environmental protection</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	114
Mrs Witmer .....	114
Ms Churley .....	115
Mrs Witmer .....	115
<b>Government appointments</b>	
Mr Crozier .....	115
Mr Tsubouchi .....	115
<b>Infrastructure program financing</b>	
Mr Johnson .....	116
Mr Hudak .....	116
<b>Health services</b>	
Mr Lalonde .....	116
Mr Clement .....	116

## Victims of crime

Ms Mushinski .....	117
Mr Young .....	117

## National child benefit supplement

Mr Martin .....	118
Mr Baird .....	118

## PETITIONS

### Health care funding

Mr Bradley .....	119
------------------	-----

### Occupational health and safety

Mr Christopherson .....	119
-------------------------	-----

### Horse riding safety

Mr Gill .....	120
Mrs Molinari .....	121

### Hospital restructuring

Mr Curling .....	120
------------------	-----

### Employment standards

Mr Christopherson .....	120
-------------------------	-----

### Paper sludge

Mr O'Toole .....	120
------------------	-----

### Sale of schools

Mr Ruprecht .....	121
-------------------	-----

### Magnetic resonance imaging

Mrs Boyer .....	121
-----------------	-----

### Private home daycare

Mr Lalonde .....	122
------------------	-----

## THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Mr Hampton .....	122
Mr Gill .....	127, 130
Mr Ruprecht .....	128, 134
Mr Bisson .....	129, 136
Mr Galt .....	129, 136
Mr Peters .....	129, 132
Mr Spina .....	130, 133
Mr Bradley .....	131
Mr Kormos .....	132, 137
Mr Baird .....	132
Mr Brown .....	133, 137
Debate deemed adjourned .....	137

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Air quality in Legislature

Mr Hastings .....	118
The Speaker .....	118

Continued overleaf



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105  
105

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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**  
Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**  
Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
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(Hansard)**

**Thursday 26 April 2001**

**Jeudi 26 avril 2001**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Gary Carr  
  
**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Président**  
L'honorable Gary Carr  
  
**Greffier**  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 26 April 2001

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 26 avril 2001

*The House met at 1000.  
Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### SAVING FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE ACT (INCOME TAX AMENDMENT), 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'ÉPARGNE EN PRÉVISION DE L'AVENIR DE NOS ENFANTS (MODIFICATION DE LA LOI DE L'IMPÔT SUR LE REVENU)

Mr Hastings moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide a tax credit for contributions to registered education savings plans / *Projet de loi 4, Loi modifiant la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu en vue de prévoir un crédit d'impôt pour les cotisations versées à un régime enregistré d'épargne-études.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** The member for Etobicoke North has 10 minutes to make his presentation.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** I'm very delighted to have this opportunity and good fortune to have come up one in the balloting to present what I consider a very important piece of legislation. I hope some day that it will see its way into a budget and become part of this government's and this party's philosophy about educational access and educational opportunity.

In May 2000, I introduced an act entitled the E-Commerce Act, 2000, which was adopted by the Attorney General in some major changes with respect to privacy provisions. So I'm having a second kick at the cat, so to speak, in terms of this particular bill.

The essence of the saving for our children's future bill, or an amendment to the Income Tax Act, relates to registered education savings plans. These plans have been in operation for a number of years and have been authorized by the federal government. However, in the last few years—I'd say since about 1996-97—there has been an incentive to parents, grandparents, foster families or other people who are responsible for children that if you contribute up to, I believe, a maximum—there is an

incentive of either \$200 or \$400 per child that can also be provided by the taxpayer through the federal government to maximize the value of the contribution. The purpose of this bill is to provide additional addenda in the building blocks of getting our young people looked after for the mid- and long-term future.

If you look at any of these plans, there is one particular plan—I won't name the company—where you can provide for about \$10 a month. You will say, "That's a pretty modest amount, but how will that really help my child, my grandchild, my nephew?" It's the old magic of compounding interest. It's the whole idea that if you put \$10 a month away, that's \$120 a year; times 10 years, and you have \$1,200. Even if you have it in a guaranteed investment instrument, at the end of that time, you will probably have close to \$2,000.

Critics might say, "Well, \$2,000 is really not going to be an awful lot of money for anybody who is trying to access post-secondary education in this province," but in point of fact, it can be a significant benefit to those families who take advantage of the RESP federally, and what we would like to see provincially, in that it reduces the long-term debt—one of the trends that is most disturbing—for those students who go to university, who go to a community college or who go to a private vocational school.

I'm sure I'm going to hear debate from the other side, "If you would only increase the amount of funding, you would solve the problem, or if you would freeze tuition fees, you would solve most of the problem." But in point of fact, we have a significant number of competitive spending constraints that we have to deal with in the outreach, whether it be in health care, in corrections, in a whole number of government activities.

It seems to me that it's incumbent to create in this province and across this country a position of leadership that would encourage a culture of responsibility to have people help their children learn for the future, to give them the opportunity to go to a post-secondary institution. I think most parents, grandparents, foster parents, uncles or aunts are interested in doing that. However, the reality is that in a large number of instances, particularly reported by Statistics Canada, it's not occurring. So that's another fundamental benefit for presenting this bill for consideration today.

Briefly, I had a news conference yesterday and I had a lovely lady from the riding of Etobicoke North attend my news conference. I'll simply use her first name. Marcy first opened an RESP account for her son when he was 13 months old and she was out of work. "As a single

mother with no source of income, I felt it was imperative"—and these are her words—"that I start saving for my son's education." Seven years later, she thinks it was one of the best things she has ever done. Now employed in a client services responsibility, in a payroll firm, she has consistently contributed \$25 to \$35 monthly for her son Alexander's post-secondary education. It doesn't seem like a lot but it will really add up. She recommends an RESP to anyone interested in securing his or her child's future.

1010

"With the way the economy is going today, there is no telling what university costs will be when Alexander goes to school," she admits. "When I look at what my nephews are going through to put themselves through university, I am really happy to have started an RESP." And she is a lady with an income of below \$30,000.

That's one of the principal provisions of this bill. It targets these benefits for individuals, single moms who are earning \$40,000 or less, and it targets families at the upper end at \$80,000. We want to ensure that if this ever becomes part of a budget or some other piece of legislation, it encapsulates those two principal considerations in the bill.

Finally, I may say that a number of provinces across this country are looking to Ontario to see what happens with respect to this piece of legislation—where it goes—because there are a large number of provincial governments that are interested at some point, given their expenditure situations, in becoming involved in this area, not just primarily for the consideration of families but also from a constitutional perspective.

In the last few years, the federal government, bless their hearts, has become involved in education, and while I don't want to use the constitutional argument to a great extent, under the existing federal arrangement, education is supposed to be primarily a provincial responsibility. Here we now have the federal government involved. We understand why. It's because we live in a globalized, interconnected world and I think that is primarily their rationale, but the provincial governments want to reassert and get involved at some point in the near future in this type of program.

Finally—or second-finally—I think it's important that this bill have serious consideration from the viewpoint of the human potential that can be released. Regardless of what government is here on this side, or in any other provincial capital or in Ottawa in the coming decades of this century, it is inevitable that the price and cost of post-secondary education is rising and will be rising. The trend rate right now is about 5% to 5.5%. If you look at a projection from Statistics Canada, by 2018, it is estimated that the cost of a university education in Ontario and probably in other parts of the country will reach nearly \$120,000. That's assuming no increases and that you just have the existing trend. This is a modest way of trying to respond in a positive, specific way in changing that trend line and getting parents and working families involved in the education of their children, their

grandchildren or foster children—and there are a lot of foster parents in this province.

That's my presentation for today. I will be glad to hear remarks from the other speakers to follow.

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** I'm pleased to speak to this bill. In fact, this bill is very similar to the policy we had in the last election. I'm very pleased that there are people on the other side who care about working families. I believe this is important enough that it should have been a government bill, but I congratulate the member for bringing something forward.

There are a couple of things the honourable member across the way mentioned, though, that make me want to say a few things. I applaud Marcy, the young lady you met yesterday, but there are families with \$40,000 or less who have more than one child and who would still find this difficult. Anything we can do to help working families is a worthwhile bill—and I'm not saying this isn't—but the reality out there is a little more stark than perhaps the other side realizes.

Over the last decade, the average student debt load upon graduation has increased by \$11,821, from \$8,675 to \$20,496. If this bill does anything to address that student debt problem in the future, it will be a worthwhile bill.

During that same period, the average tuition fee for an arts and science student has increased by \$2,300 per year, from \$1,639 to \$3,951 per year. Again, if you give with the one hand, as this bill wants to do, and then take away, on the other hand, by increasing tuition, then the net effect will not be of any value to the students of this province, either now or in the future.

The cost of living has increased by 373% over the past three decades, while tuition fees have increased by approximately 678%. From 1984 to 1999, the aggregate amount of outstanding student loans increased 6.2 times, while the median student loan debt rose from \$3,000 to \$7,000.

Today, to put this in more practical terms, a student must work 660 hours in order to pay for a four-year bachelor degree. In 1977, the same degree would have required 235 hours of work. I know when my cohort went to university 25 to 30 years ago, if you worked a summer on minimum wage for four months, you could actually pay for your university and your room and board. That's not possible today. If students live in cities and towns where there is a university or a college, they can attend those institutions, if that's their only choice financially, but for those who don't have institutions in their hometowns and they need to leave their town, the room and board is an added expense.

For the 1997-98 academic year, the average OSAP award was \$7,700, but the average student debt levels have more than doubled since the provincial government eliminated the Ontario student grant. Over the past five years, the amount of loan assistance available to students has decreased by \$500 million. This is from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. Some 31% of family units in which the major income recipient was under 25



owed student loans. Again, we do need bills like this, but they're only a beginning. In these young families, student loans represented 52% of their total household debt.

I found it interesting that the member's bill includes families, single people who make \$40,000 or less or families that make \$80,000 or less. Well, \$80,000 was the average family income of the students who went to medical school at Western 10 years ago. That average family income has increased from \$80,000 to \$140,000 now. I found the \$80,000 a very interesting figure because of that. It probably isn't coincidental; maybe the research was done. But even families between \$80,000 and \$140,000 can't afford to send their kids to medical school the same way that they did a few years ago because of the deregulation of the fees.

The average annual student loan disbursement rose by 30.9% from 1991 to 1996. It has actually gone up by over \$1,000. I'm happy to see the feds are getting into the game. It is a provincial jurisdiction, but as the member opposite mentioned, it is a global economy and we have to invest in post-secondary at all levels of government if we are to compete.

Some 217,000 post-secondary students relied on the government's Ontario student assistance program to cover a portion of their educational and associated living costs in 1997-98. These students, without assistance, would presumably not have been able to attend post-secondary university. Again, any assistance to students, whether it's through RESPs or through government assistance, is needed.

I'll talk in a few minutes about how the demographics are changing. We will have a huge baby boom effect, the echo boom effect, which will require more investment into post-secondary education.

Interest rates on the Canadian student loan are based on a fixed rate of prime 5% or a floating rate of prime plus 2.5%. Actually, the Ontario student loan is based on prime plus 1%. In this case, the Ontario government is actually charging the students less interest than the federal government. I know the Ontario government and the federal government are working on harmonizing that, making one student loan, and I support that. Again, anything that will help working families send their children to post-secondary education, something we support on this side of the House.

1020

The default rate on student loans for university students last year, the year 2000, was 7.1%; the college default rate was 17.2%. I think the reason for that is that in many instances students who go on to community college are adult learners who have families who can't necessarily pay right away and they need time and assistance in order to do that.

I actually had a meeting yesterday with the bureaucrats from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, and work is underway to improve the OSAP system. I'm happy to hear that and am looking forward to what exactly the changes will be so that we can respond.

There are no accurate records that are kept which measure the level of debt incurred through family and

non-governmental assistance bank loans. We have statistics on how many students have OSAP and Canadian students' loans from the federal government, but we really don't have accurate statistics about the students who don't qualify for OSAP, or even for those who do, as far as how much debt they have incurred from banks, like the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Bank of Montreal and so forth. I believe if we had statistics, we could see that this problem is even greater than we know, and therefore, again, any bill or any policy that will improve this is welcome.

I just want to put a human face to some of the numbers I gave. Jeff Sutton is a major in finance and economics from the University of Western Ontario. I have his permission to talk about his case. His hometown is right here in Toronto. A good student, his current education-related debt is \$17,500. His aspirations are a career in sales and marketing, possibly an MBA. He's currently the vice-president of education on Western's student council, and he has previously worked in retail and security. He volunteered as a Big Brother during his first three years at Western. He's also a member of the hockey team at Western. This is a responsible young man who has not incurred this debt irresponsibly. In fact, for the first two years of his studies he didn't have a debt, because his parents were able to help him. But something changed in his family situation which then required him to take out loans, and that is why in two years he incurred such a large debt. But he was willing to do it, because he knows the statistics: if you have a post-secondary education, you'll go further in life, you'll be healthier and you'll be safer. Research has shown all that, and it's actually logical as well.

Tina Yeung is in theatre and drama studies at the University of Toronto. Her debt is \$14,050. She has worked in numerous jobs, including assistant tax administrator, tour guide for middle-school-aged youth and camp counsellor. She currently has two jobs, as a pharmacy assistant and working in a restaurant.

So, to assume that some of these students are irresponsible in incurring the debt or that their families haven't helped them is wrong. They do what they can, but they do need assistance from us, and indeed that's our responsibility.

Tina also finds time to do volunteer work. She's a member of the theatre standing committee for Hart House Theatre, she's class representative for four years and a volunteer with numerous local and community theatre groups—truly a future leader in our community. This is what she says:

"I had to work through most of high school in order to save for university. After the first year, it seemed that I would need to continue to work during the school year as well as the summer. Most of my tuition and residence costs that weren't covered by my student loans were paid for by my jobs, but I did receive some assistance from my family. I wanted to try to pay for as much of my education as I could out of my savings from work.

"I hope to one day be trilingual ... so that if theatre or film doesn't work out I can pursue a degree in tourism.

No matter where I end up, I would like to be active in my community.”

She already owes, without finishing, \$14,000.

Scott Courtice from Queen's University already owes \$22,000. He wants to go to law school and possibly a career in politics, so of course we need to support Scott. Scott comes from a middle-class family with one working parent and his father is semi-retired, having recently left the small business he owned. His parents assisted him as much as they could but, like many students, this support fell short of covering all of the costs of a post-secondary education. He falls in a category that does not allow him to get OSAP, so he has secured bank loans for his four years of school, and that is why the loan is so high, a situation that sees Scott making interest payments of about \$150 each month. That means, in addition to the cost of tuition, books and living expenses, if he goes on to law school, he'll have to find \$150 a month. But he remains optimistic. “I plan on attending law school and aspire to enter politics. I have a passion for social justice and want to enter politics to safeguard Canada as an equal and just society.”

These are amazing young people we have in our community. Again, we applaud any measure on this side of the House that helps working families help their kids go on to post-secondary education, like Jeff, like Tina, like Scott.

I want to talk just for a couple minutes about the increase in demographics or the change in demographics in the next decade. The Ministry of Finance's demographic projections indicate that the population aged 18 to 24 will grow by more than 20% in the next decade. The majority of that growth, by the way, is in the 905 area. In Durham, in particular, that age cohort will grow by 40%, and yet the University of Toronto and York University have asked for capital funds to expand their campuses in those areas and have, at least for now, been rejected.

I believe the government needs to heed those demographics. We're going to have an explosion in that demographic in the next decade and we need to plan for it now. Again, if you look at the study, it shows that these kids don't live away from home, the ones in the 905 belt; they prefer to go to universities here in Toronto. So these students and their families are assuming that they will have a space in one of our three universities here and are financially planning for that eventuality, not for going away, the majority of them, and therefore we need to do our part and plan for that eventuality as well.

The bill has many good points. Again, I like the fact that families with incomes of \$80,000 and less will be eligible, as well as single individuals with an income of \$40,000 or less. As the member opposite won't be surprised to hear, I would have liked it to go a little further because I do know that if an individual has an income of \$40,000 or less, there are differences if that individual has more than one child. Marcy, the young lady who spoke to the member opposite yesterday, perhaps only had one child, Alexander, and she managed to do the right thing, and I applaud her. However, if she

had more than one child, would she have been able to put away that money every month for her kids' education?

A good start, but again, this government gives with one hand and takes with the other. Quite frankly, I hope the member opposite doesn't have the same fate that my private member's bill had, the severance bill, where it was passed unanimously. It was supported on all sides of the House, but this government, by delaying legislation by one month, killed all the bills. I hope this bill doesn't have the same fate. Indeed, if Mike Harris were truly supportive of this and of these endeavours, he would have made this a government bill and not a private member's bill.

Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party and this caucus support any change that will help working families send their kids to post-secondary education, and I've been pleased to speak to this bill.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I very much would have liked to have engaged in this debate because there are things I want to tell the member for Etobicoke North and his government about what they are not doing with respect to adequate funding for the post-secondary educational system. So while I would have supported it—I would have, in spite of some comments I made to a constituent who is here—and while I have concerns, I feel compelled and obliged to tell you, Speaker, that under the standing orders this may be a violation, and I'll read section 56 because I'll need your ruling.

Section 56 says, “Any bill, resolution, motion or address, the passage of which would impose a tax or specifically direct the allocation of public funds, shall not be passed by the House unless recommended by a message from the Lieutenant Governor, and shall be proposed only by a minister of the crown.”

Speaker, I think you need to rule on this because we need to protect ourselves from this motion before us.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Marchese has raised a point of order. Is there any comment on the point of order?

1030

**Mr Hastings:** This is an old chestnut used by somebody who is probably not prepared to deal with the merit of the case.

If the member for Fort York could recall—and I'm sure he has a very good memory—the previous member for Algoma-Manitoulin from your caucus raised the same issue with respect to a bill I introduced three years ago called the Technology for Classrooms Tax Credit Act. It was referred to Speaker Stockwell and to the leg counsel at that time and it came back with a clarification and clearance.

If you read the bill carefully, it is not a money bill, because it does not propose the expenditure of a penny. What it does do is raise the idea of looking at a tax credit. It's a concept. There's a big difference. I hope the member for Fort York would take that into consideration and get on with the debate on the merits of the bill.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston):** This is subject matter that is dear to my heart and I commend the member for bringing the subject matter forward.



However, in 1998, at the time I wrote an article that appeared in the *Toronto Star* on this very subject, the idea of a tax credit attached to an RESP, I wanted to propose this as a private member's bill. I was told by leg counsel this would be a money bill, that it could not be introduced into this assembly by way of a private member's bill for that reason.

I would like to support what the member for Trinity-Spadina has proposed with regard to his reference to the standing orders and I would ask that you look into this matter, whether it is appropriate for this bill to be introduced in this fashion.

Of course, we support the notion of the bill and the principle of the bill and, to back what my colleague said earlier in her comments, this should have been a government bill and not a private member's bill. It is indeed worthy of support.

However, one has to question the appropriateness of this bill in this form at this time, using the vehicle of a private member's bill, so I would refer that as well to you, Mr Speaker.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I certainly appreciate the points from the opposition. It is my understanding that due diligence had been exercised in this case with this legislation to ensure that we were technically correct. It is my understanding that we are. Certainly, Mr Speaker, if you wish to pass further comment on that—so I would respectfully suggest that we should continue with this. It is an important issue. The opposition has certainly expressed interest in pursuing this. I think the member has worked hard to bring this in today for all of us to debate, a very important issue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. I want some time to consider this, so we will take a short recess while I do.

*The House recessed from 1033 to 1038.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would like to thank the member for Trinity-Spadina for raising this point of order and the other members who contributed their comments to this point of order.

I would cite as a precedent Mr Stockwell's ruling on Bill 24; I'll just quote this for you:

"With respect to the orderliness of Bill 24, it does not impose a tax"—which is similar to Bill 4—"indeed, it does the opposite in alleviating a tax. It does not specifically allocate public funds; its passage may cause the government to forgo a certain amount of revenue, and thereby impose a burden on the Consolidated Revenue Fund, but this equates only indirectly to an expenditure. There are ample precedents fully supporting the permissibility of such a proposal."

I share Mr Stockwell's views; this bill is in order.

On a point of order, the member for Etobicoke North.

1040

**Mr Hastings:** I have a point of order for the Chair as to the use of the time. Do we still keep going on the hour, or do we restore the clock for the last six or seven minutes?

**The Deputy Speaker:** We have not lost any time; we have the same amount of time for each speaker from each caucus.

**Mr Marchese:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate the clarification you made. I'm happy; that's why we're here. We call points of order on the basis of our understanding and then you clarify them and we move on.

On this issue, the member from Etobicoke North—

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** It gave you five minutes to learn something about the issue.

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Wettlaufer, it's good to see you here.

Here's my problem: while we are going to support this bill, the problem with the bill is that it doesn't speak to the problems that have been caused by this government. As the member from Etobicoke North said, he's going to hear from the opposition about all the things that we are going to say that may appear to be in opposition, and then he spoke about the fact that there are so many other constraints upon this government in education and health that there's really not much we could do, so this is a really neat idea and we ought to be supporting it.

But here's the problem: this government has cut from our university sector alone—not to forget the college sector—\$500 million, and they did this in a good economy. When the money was rolling in, Mr Hastings, the member from Etobicoke North, wasn't there to say that we shouldn't be cutting \$500 million from post-secondary education. I never heard him or any other member saying, "We need to support our post-secondary education with money." He was there saying, "We've got to cut. There's too much fat in the bureaucracy and in government and we've got to cut."

Yes, they cut in good economic times and they cut in post-secondary education, the university and college system, and they do it with glee, they do it with pleasure. They have no problem finding \$12 billion or so of our income tax money to give away to the corporate sector and to individuals who make high wages. They have no problem stealing your money, good citizens, and giving it away, instead of investing those billions of dollars in the sectors that are critical to us, which are health and elementary, secondary and post-secondary education. So while we have money, we do nothing with it except to give it away to the people who don't need it.

Mr Hastings comes forth with a neat idea saying, "Parents need help." Yes, they need help, but if they truly need help, why don't you eliminate tuition fees altogether? We wouldn't need this scheme, because then everybody would have access. How would we pay for it? We would pay for it through a progressive income tax system. We would pay for it by not giving away our money to the private sector and to individuals on high incomes. We would have loads of money if we decided that tuition fees are a barrier and that it's costly and that it's keeping a lot of people away from post-secondary education. But that's not the commitment this government has. The commitment they have is completely exclusionary. If you've got the money, fine; if you don't,

too bad. This tax credit is not going to help the person who is making \$30,000 very much, and although Mr Hastings mentioned one individual who says, "We've got a plan for the future of our children"—good God, doesn't he know that the majority of people who make \$30,000 can't invest a penny in RRSPs or invest in the registered education savings plan? People don't have money to invest. He would know and you would know that over 300,000 tenants are paying over 50% of their income on rent alone.

Do you think, therefore, that Mr Hastings believes or understands that they would invest the rest of the 50% on these kinds of programs? They will not, because the other 50% is for, what, basic stuff like maybe some clothes, and it might not be a fine jacket but just plain old stuff, just plain old clothes. Do you think they would have any money for a little entertainment, like going to a show, perhaps? We're not talking about Florida and going off with some fancy cigar; we're talking about just a little money for some recreational activity. I tell you, the people earning \$30,000, \$35,000 or \$40,000 can't afford to stash money away in a plan.

I know there is a gentleman here who is nodding and saying, "Yes, they can." Well, there might be, because Mr Hastings mentioned one person. Maybe there are two or three, maybe there are more. There aren't too many. The people who will invest in this plan are the people who have money. I tell you, and I've said it here many times, I as a person who makes \$78,000 could not afford to pay—I know, Speaker, you seem a bit afraid; I'm intimidating you too. My daughter had only one year of help from me. I make \$78,000. The other years, she has been on her own.

I know, from the Minister of Culture, that's OK and fine by you, and maybe with your \$78,000 plus your ministerial salary you've been able to stash away a couple of bucks. God bless you, and God bless your buddies, women and men buddies, who have been able to put the money aside to help their kids. But only in the last two years have I been able to—I decided it's important to put some money aside for my son, because he'll be, hopefully, in university a couple of years from now. So, I get the benefit from the federal government, and I would get the benefit from this bill, should he introduce it. So I, who started this two years ago for my son, will benefit somewhat.

But I am arguing with you—Speaker, don't be too intimidated; through you to Mr Hastings—that the people who make \$30,000 or \$40,000 don't have the extra cash to stash away in such a plan. What they need is help from this government. What they need is to be able to reinvest in post-secondary education. Put the \$500 million back. Reduce tuition fees if you won't eliminate them. If you won't have it free, reduce it; don't increase it, as you have done for the last five years, where tuition fees have gone up 60% under you fine people, you fine taxpayer types of people—60%.

We are short of professors in our university system. Our facilities are going down, in spite of your bragging

remarks about the SuperBuild fund, which only spends half of the money we used to spend, and this, as you have a growing population getting into the universities. You smile gleefully, saying, "Ha, ha, ha, we're spending so much more."

We are short of money, short of university professors, we'll have 90,000 more students by the next decade, and this government says, "Don't worry, we've got a private university coming in. They'll fill in the space." How can one little university fill the space? "Oh, don't worry about that. The SuperBuild is building so much space that it will cover all the 90,000 people," the argument comes from the spokespeople of these fine people, including the minister.

The space is not there. So we've got a little plan here, a little tax credit. It's going to help people like me, at my \$78,000 range, but it's not going to help people like Stavros Papavasiliou, who is here today to observe the proceedings of this House and to listen to us all debate this very issue so that he can learn from Mr Hastings how he will benefit from such a plan. So if his dad is able to invest a couple of bucks more in this plan, Mr Hastings is your man, because he's going to come and give you \$100 more on the first \$1,000. That should help a whole lot. That's going to help a whole lot, because the average tuition fees are \$20,000. Ha. OK. Invest \$1,000, you get \$100. My God, yes. If Stavros is here, he's going to save you. He's going to help you a lot.

1050

Mr Hastings said, "We've got so many constraints, such as, we've got to give more money to the corporate sector to reduce their load because, God, they need help from us. And the income tax cut, we're so committed to that and we've got to give the other two billion to four billion bucks; oh, these constraints on us in order to get the economy going." John, how do you like that? How do you like these arguments? How do you guys defend yourselves out there? How do you defend your commitment to these couple of billion dollars in income tax cuts to the corporate sector when the economy is slipping?

Do you remember M. Harris saying, "We have created a recession-proof economy"? Do you remember that? That was M. Harris saying, "We have created a recession-proof economy," the dumbest thing I've ever heard.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Dumb and dumber.

**Mr Marchese:** And it's getting dumber because they are still plunging ahead with their plan—the plan is working—to destroy us. And what was the plan? Income tax cuts. That's what was going to save us from the devastation of recessions, should they occur in the US.

By the way, do you remember that Mike Harris and the others laughed, ha, ha, when the NDP was in power and we had a recession? They would laugh, saying, "No, you caused the recession. You didn't have a revenue problem, you had a spending problem," they used to say.



**Mr Kormos:** They were there with their hands out every step of the way: "Build me a hospital. Build me a school."

**Mr Marchese:** Every step of the way their hands were reaching out.

I say to you, we've got an economy that's about to plunge down.

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** Two per cent projections for next year. Is anyone reading the newspapers?

**Mr Kormos:** North is doing well. Mr Stronach is doing even better.

**Mr Marchese:** Growth. Mr Stronach I think earned \$25 million this year. There are a couple of people doing well in the economy, but generally, thousands of people are being laid off, every day for the last two months.

**Mr Kormos:** How many for Nortel alone?

**Mr Marchese:** Nortel I think laid off 5,000, 10,000 people. So many companies are laying people off.

I say to the folks across the way that if the economy is going down, we need to save some money. We need to protect ourselves and not give it away. We need it because welfare is going to go up, unless they decide to completely—

**Mr Kormos:** The Tories will put them on the street.

**Mr Marchese:** That would save us some money if they put them on the street, wouldn't it?

Mr Hastings is quite proud of this bill, I understand that, but I am saying that what we need is a plan from the government to help students, to help the university sector, so that we have the money to be able to prepare ourselves for this new economy, and this bill doesn't do it. It doesn't help the majority of people earning 30,000, 40,000, 50,000 bucks because they need all the money they've got.

**Mr Kormos:** And \$18,000 and \$20,000.

**Mr Marchese:** Forget about those people because they don't have any money.

Although we are going to support this as a little measure that moves the yardstick just a little, it does nothing really to deal with the problems these people have caused.

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** It's a pleasure for me to speak on Bill 4 this morning, which is an Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide a tax credit for contributions to registered education savings plans.

My colleague from Trinity-Spadina was talking about the cost of jackets. It's amazing that my trademark says Wal-Mart but I thought his, on the other side, said Armani. So I wonder what he was talking about.

There is no doubt that providing financial means for a higher education is a challenging task for many people. As my colleague from Trinity-Spadina would lead you to believe, he would like to have the government pay everything, pay the full education costs. I guess he wants free tickets on the TTC. He probably wants a free Cadillac also, while I would expect a free Chevrolet.

Most people believe, and I adhere to that philosophy, that there is a responsibility both for the government and

for the person who receives the education to have a financial stake in obtaining that education. There are different ways of obtaining the financial means to obtain a higher education. One would be to have rich parents, but most of us don't have that luxury. Some of us might be lucky in winning a lottery but, again, most of us don't have that luxury. Of course, there's the scholarship avenue but, again, an awful lot of students don't have that opportunity.

What I would like to talk briefly about this morning is the registered education savings plan.

Ce plan encourage l'enseignement supérieur. Ce plan est visé pour ceux avec une source de revenu soit inférieure ou moyenne. Ce plan encourage les parents ou les étudiants de démontrer leur responsabilité sur le plan personnel pour leur futur, au lieu de toujours compter sur le gouvernement.

I realize that what we have in front of us here today is not a perfect solution, this part of the solution. But to hear my colleague from Trinity-Spadina this morning—he had approximately 15 minutes to address this issue. He probably spoke on it for about a minute. He talked about everything else but the issue that's before us today. I guess I could probably expect that from him, because basically they are more interested in the ideology than in dealing with the problems that people face, that students are facing.

However, and I can speak from experience, I'm absolutely convinced that once you have a financial stake in your education, the results will be there. I'm sure there's going to be a tremendous amount of personal satisfaction in having invested in your future.

Let me quote from a person who sent a letter to Mr Hastings. I'll quote from her letter, which was sent on April 24.

"I am an RESP subscriber with a two-and-a-half-year-old son. I would benefit greatly from your proposal to introduce a tax credit for RESP investment for low- to middle-income families. Financial security is a major concern for all Canadians, and post-secondary education is a major investment that requires planning and saving well in the future. As a teacher myself, I understand the value of a good education and hope to instill that in my son."

I think that speaks for the large majority of Ontarians. They are willing to contribute financially to their own education and to the education of their children. So I would urge all the members of this House today to vote in favour of this bill.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's my privilege and my pleasure to speak in support of the member for Etobicoke North's private member's bill. Mr Hastings has gone to some extent to represent the argument that families—small, independent economic units called the family—and their children need a future, and certainly the children.

This goes a long way toward signalling the right kind of policy, which is to lower taxes, really. People all over, from all income groups, have argued for years that taxes

are too high and some kind of bureaucrat makes the decision on where to spend it and allocate it, without much accountability to the public.

But I speak from the perspective of a parent of five children. It's my wish and hope that all five children graduate with some sort of skills and education, be it university, college or careers. There are skilled-trade shortages today. So we have to do everything we can within out fiscal and legislative authority to, first, signal the importance of parents contributing and getting tax relief for contributing to their children's future.

Indeed, it could be said that I, as a parent, and my wife work very hard for our economic unit. I don't expect in a normal sequence of events that Mr Sergio or anyone else in this House today should pay for my children. We have a collective responsibility, and of course, as we all know, post-secondary institution funding, whether it's through the Canada student loan or through OSAP or for the direct funding of the operational costs of post-secondary institutions, does come from the provincial government.

**1100**

We have a challenge ahead of us to make sure that we have quality education that's accessible and affordable. In the climate that we're in today, where all of the stakeholders within the universities want more income, which is arguably correct, and they want to be rewarded, who is going to pay for that? Who else is paying for it? The government actually has no money. It really re-allocates or redistributes money.

The economic unit of this country, of this great province is the family. What Mr Hastings is trying to say here is that it's the right thing to do to save for your children's future. I support that. I think everyone in the House will support it. I look forward to unanimous consent and moving forward quickly with a plan that helps every family in this province, regardless of income, to help their children and our collective future.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** I'm pleased to speak for about half a minute, I guess, to support my colleague's bill. I think this is a very important initiative that will help many families in the province of Ontario to save money for their children's education.

The member asked me to indicate my experience. I've got three young boys. My wife and I are already trying to save money for their post-secondary education that we hope they will pursue.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Name them.

**Mr Arnott:** I should name them, yes: Jack, Phillip and Dean. Jack is almost six—five and a half he tells me; Phillip is three and a half, almost four; and Dean is two. So we're already starting to try to save money for their education. But the fact is that we're very fortunate and privileged that our income in our household is such that we're able to afford to save money at this early time. But I think there are a lot of families that are struggling to put together a few dollars every month, and this initiative would help those families.

The thing I like the most about the member's bill is that it targets the available assistance that the government may have to support and encourage people to save for their children's post-secondary education to the families that really need it: the low- and middle-income families. So I think that's something the member should be commended for. I want to congratulate him for the good work that he provides on behalf of his constituents and the private member's bills that he brings forward and encourage all members of this House to support this very important initiative.

**The Deputy Speaker:** You're allowed to use the balance of your caucus's time plus your two minutes for wrap-up. Is that your intention?

**Mr Hastings:** Yes. I'd like to comment on and appreciate the comments from the members for Hamilton Mountain, Wellington-Waterloo, Durham and Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. I think they spoke practically about the merits of this proposition.

Yesterday I had the great opportunity to meet a young lady by the name of Sasha, who is a constituent in Minister Flaherty's constituency of Whitby-Ajax. She's about 23 years of age. She has an eight-month-old little girl. She's going to school. She's trying to complete a program; I didn't exactly get it, but I think it's in business, accounting. She is already saving \$10 a month for Rianna, her little girl. I thought that was the most practical application, the most specific way in which we as legislators can affect the lives of people beyond this place.

I thank the member for Trinity-Spadina for his remarks. However, I have to radically depart from my comments. I think if he saw that young lady—and I've met other young ladies and gentlemen who are doing their best to approach the challenges of the 21st century. There are specific, practical means by which we as legislators can help these people, because they aspire for their families, for their children. To me, this is one of the effective ways of empowering individuals and families, rather than simply relying on the state for financial assistance. It has to be an effective two-way partnership. Unfortunately, the member for Trinity-Spadina persists in the old ideological mantra that the only way to save for one's education is the OSAP approach. That's fine, but it does debt-load people coming out of programs who sometimes do not have jobs.

I think the other practical dimension of this proposal is that it will allow education planners to track where the dollars are going in the programs that are required for the 21st century. In that spirit, I hope every member in this House, including the member for Trinity-Spadina, would reconsider and rethink about the people who are now two, three years old and are coming. It doesn't help me, but I believe it's incumbent that we try to help future generations, and this bill, the Saving for Our Children's Future Act, is one of the most practical and effective on-the-ground ways of doing so.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This completes the time allocated for debate. The question will be put following the second ballot item.



MINISTERIAL TRAVEL  
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2001  
LOI DE 2001 SUR L'OBLIGATION  
DE RENDRE COMPTE  
DES VOYAGES MINISTÉRIELS

Mr Bartolucci moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act respecting Accountability for Ministerial Travel / Projet de loi 2, Loi concernant l'obligation de rendre compte des voyages ministériels.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** The member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** First of all, I'd like to thank the member for Prince Edward-Hastings for changing the order of the private members' hour so that we can debate this today. I would also like to thank the House for unanimously supporting that change.

I'm going to divide my 10 minutes into three different sections: the why for the bill, the how of the bill and the what of the bill. I think all three are very important to the taxpayers of Ontario.

Let me start with the how of the bill. This is not a cute political ploy to try to embarrass the government or anything else like that. I think it's important that the history of the bill be explained to the people of Ontario. This bill has been introduced three times before. It was first introduced on September 29, 1998, as Bill 64. It was introduced a second time on April 26, 1999, as Bill 7. It was introduced a third time on May 16, 2000, as Bill 77. It is now being introduced for a fourth time.

In fairness to everyone in this House, this is the very first opportunity that the House has had to debate the legislation. It happens, though, that we're debating this legislation after a throne speech that used the word "accountability" eight times and that used the words "fiscal responsibility" four times. Certainly, in pre-throne-speech news coverage, one paper headline indicated that accountability would be the catch phrase for the Harris government over the course of the next few years.

I suggest to you that "accountability" should be our catch phrase always. That's why I introduced the legislation back in 1998. I saw that there was a need for this type of legislation. I say that because I don't know if the people of Ontario are aware that as individual members we make our expenditures public every year in a document reporting individual members' expenditures for a particular fiscal year. It is a matter of public record that is reported widely by the media, and I think that's very important. It covers topics like travel between residence and Queen's Park, travel within the riding to do constituency business, assembly travel, family travel. It documents how many trips you take a year, the amount for your Toronto accommodation and total expenses.

1110

Then it breaks it down into support staff expenditures: how much you pay for your support staff, your constituency office rent, your office operations, your com-

munications, your global total, your long-distance charges and Assembly support total, for the grand total. I think this is a very healthy exercise, because we in this House all know we are using taxpayers' dollars, that at the very end of the day we are accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario, and we do that when we go to the polls, whenever an election is held, usually every four years. I think it's extremely important that this accountability and this fiscally responsible approach that we want to use must be made public. It must be open, it must be transparent in all aspects of government business. That's why I introduce this bill today, the first time it's going to be debated but for the fourth time.

Colleagues, what will this bill do? Well, there will be accountability for ministerial travel. Let me explain to you what that means. More importantly, though, it's important for the people of Ontario to understand what that means. Any member of the executive council of Ontario who travels to areas outside Ontario on government business shall, within 60 days of returning from his or her travels, submit the information which is set out—and I'll read this later. That person is to submit it to the Legislative Assembly if the Assembly is sitting or, if the Assembly is not sitting, which happens frequently in this place, to the Clerk of the Assembly.

What type of information do we think working families in Ontario should have about ministerial travel? We think a written summary of the purpose of the travel and of any accomplishments resulting from the travel, including a listing of the benefits in terms of tangible investment and employment opportunities that the travel will bring to Ontario.

Let me suggest to you that I am not opposed to travelling outside this province. In fact, I encourage it. I don't ever want to build a wall around Ontario. But I believe it has to be meaningful travel, and it has to ensure that Ontarians get the best bang for the buck they are spending. It is imperative that this be a transparent process. We think a detailed statement of all expenses incurred by the member, as well as by any staff accompanying the member, should be published.

Certainly a minister is going to bring staff and experts with him. There's nothing wrong with that. It is important, though, that the taxpayers of Ontario understand what the cost is. We think it's important that a listing of individuals and organizations contacted, and with whom meetings were held, should be published as well.

Finally, we think a detailed summary of the significant terms and conditions of any contract signed during the travel period must be published, without divulging any confidentiality in any agreement. What we want the people of Ontario, the hard-working families of Ontario, to understand is that when this government, our government, any government travels in Ontario, they have access to the information, they have access to the why of the travel and they have access to the success of the travel. Will contracts be signed on every trip? Probably not, but it is important for the people of Ontario to understand that these trips do take place, that there is a

cost attached to them and because we are using your money, the Ontario tax dollar, we must ensure that we are held accountable and that the taxpayers, the ones who are footing the bill, know how much we are spending.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Same as when David Peterson was the leader.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I hear a little heckling about previous governments from a person I have a lot of respect for. I don't care about previous governments. Pass this into law and we can look at the present, we can look to the future and we can ensure that this information, which belongs to the taxpayers of Ontario, is put in effect.

Past governments of all political stripes can be held accountable. So don't say it was the Liberals or the New Democrats or the Tories or anybody else; it was all past governments. Let's rectify that shortcoming with positive legislation so that progressive legislation will be the order of the day for the government of the day and for future governments.

I don't think it's asking too much for ministers, by example, to be accountable to the people of Ontario for their fiscal responsibility. In fact I think it is imperative that that happen. If I thought this was frivolous legislation, I certainly would not have introduced it in this House, because I like to bring serious legislation to this House.

I suggest to you that if you want public institutions to be held accountable, there is no more public institution than the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, this provincial Parliament. We, the elected people of Ontario at the provincial level, have a duty, a responsibility to be accountable in a very fiscal way, and as ministers and as the executive council, I ask you to take the lead.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm please to rise today and speak to the member for Sudbury's private member's bill, An Act respecting accountability for ministerial travel.

In the last session, I had the pleasure of supporting the member's private member's bill on protection of children from prostitution, and I commend him for both his private member's bills. I also want to welcome here this morning our colleague from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Norm Miller. It's his first morning of private members' business.

Our government believes we should be accountable to the people who elect us, and that is why during the throne speech the government chose accountability as one of the three priorities on the challenges we face in the 21st century. I believe that the government does not own the money. It is the people's money, and that should never be forgotten. The hard-working families of our province expect and deserve that their tax dollars will always be spent in an accountable and efficient manner.

I think Her Honour said it best in last week's throne speech: "Accountability is required, not just of Ontario's government, but of all governments and indeed of all institutions funded by taxpayers.

"Government is the servant of the people, not master. Citizens are more than 'customers' or 'clients'; the entire

public sector belongs to them. Citizens are entitled to transparency in the operation of public institutions, including openness about how they spend and reporting of their performance and results."

As a government we have introduced a number of measures aimed at improving accountability in the manner in which government operates. First of all, in education we have introduced a fair funding model for education that allows everyone to see where money is being spent in our system, and measures that protect classroom spending.

In last week's throne speech a number of additional accountability measures were introduced to make sure that monies are spent properly. In fact the phrases "accountability" and "fiscal responsibility," referred to by Mr Bartolucci, were used over 15 times in the throne speech. Because our government believes in accountability and because I believe in accountability, I will be supporting the private member's bill.

In fact, I think it is long overdue. I kind of wish the member for Sudbury had been here a few years ago. Although I am relatively to this House, compared to members like the members for Davenport and York South-Weston, when this bill came up, I was talking to a good friend of mine, Mr Runciman, the member for Leeds-Grenville, about a wonderful four-star tour the provincial Liberals took when they were on this side of the fence. I think we should bring this to their attention, because it adds to the need for accountability.

1120

In November 1989, Premier Peterson led a group of politicians and business people on a trade mission to Italy. The business people paid for their trips, while the Premier, 13 Liberal MPPs and 12 staff members went along for the ride. The Liberal MPPs' tab was picked up by the people of this province. Included among those who went along for the ride were the member for York South-Weston, the member for Davenport and someone called Greg Sorbara, the Liberal candidate for Vaughan-King-Aurora.

I understand that travelling is necessary to build trade and cultural relations, but what is also important is being accountable. That is why I was shocked that the cost of the pasta tour was approximately \$310,000. About half of this total was spent on hotel, food, travel and entertainment bills for the Premier and his immediate 25-member entourage of ministers, backbenchers and staff.

The hotel suite of the Premier of the time, Mr Peterson, was \$1,000 a night. To give you an idea of how much this is, I called the Royal York this morning and asked how much a night in the most expensive hotel suite they have costs, and it is \$339. That's in 2001 dollars and includes breakfast for two. I did a bit of research and found that during the trip the Petersons and friends stayed at the Principe Di Savoia, which the Penguin Guide to Italy calls "properly luxurious." It says it offers "peace, luxury and efficient staff." The night manager said, "We're a five-star hotel by the train station, one of the best in all Milan and in all of Italy."



The purpose of my bringing out this example is exactly what Mr Bartolucci is saying. It has gone on in the past. There's no question that probably in each party there have been cases of abuse. But the fact of the matter is, I think we have to be accountable, and I have no problem with some kind of record being kept of each trip. I know that's the feeling of this House.

A number of other people want to speak to this. I appreciate the time today, and I'll turn it over to them.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** I'm very happy to stand and speak in support of my colleague Mr Bartolucci's bill on ministerial accountability.

It is of interest to hear those who choose to speak on behalf of the government that ultimately they too will be supportive of this bill. What it means essentially is that they agree with us that this government has to be accountable for its actions. This government, all of a sudden, is on this plane of greater accountability for Ontario, as though accountability for the rest of us was never there before. They intend to bring in various accountability measures for the government, for the broader public sector, for school boards, for hospitals—all laudable goals. We'll ask these members of the broader public sector today, if they feel accountable, who they report to when a hospital budget today has to be submitted to the Ministry of Health for approval, when a school board can't get their own budgets being submitted to the Ministry of Education approved in a timely fashion, and yet we ask the government why they would put further measures on these broader public sector groups when they can't even deal with the rules they have in place now or the so-called guidelines they have now.

**Mrs Marland:** Sandra, we're supporting the bill.

**Mrs Pupatello:** The former minister for children wants to stand and quip in the House. I encourage her to stand up and speak to this bill. This former minister for children should be responsible for her actions as a minister for children.

**Mrs Marland:** I am. I went out of the province once.

**Mrs Pupatello:** I suggest it be on the report card of how children are doing today. How are they doing in our schools today? Coming from Windsor, this is a very good question to ask today. This is the government that brought in a funding formula that is totally unworkable, completely inflexible and is the root cause of all the chaos that exists in our schools today: why we have strikes, why we have contracts being settled for a year at a time and that's it, when they used to be settled for a minimum of three years. We will see chaos in one centre after another from now until, at minimum, the next election.

But I want to bring to attention the wonderful question my colleague from Sarnia asked the new Minister of Finance in the House yesterday: "Why would you ask all of Ontario to tighten up, to be accountable, to watch spending, to cap spending," when we look at the numbers from the Office of the Premier? In 1995-96 the total expenses out of that office were \$2.1 million. And what

are they in the latest round of figures, for the year 2000-01? They're up to \$3.2 million. That should make all of us gasp.

What were the salaries and wages for the office of the Premier in 1995-96? They were \$1.4 million. This was Mike Harris the big tax cut fighter, let's not forget—tighten the seat belts. Do you know what they were for the office of the Premier in salary and wages in the year 2000-01? They were \$2.3 million. That's the sampling.

As best put by my colleague Mrs Di Cocco from Sarnia, there's one rule for Harris and another rule for the rest of us in Ontario. That's something we're not going to abide. We think there should be accountability in every office of government. We're going to start at the head of that, and that is the office of the Premier.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I'm pleased to participate in the debate this morning. We will be supporting Bill 2, put forward by the member for Sudbury, and we will be pleased to do so.

I want to make a couple of comments with respect to the bill. First, I should say I was a little bit surprised by the member for Simcoe North's raising the issue of the expenses of previous governments. Before this debate ends this morning, I'm going to wonder whether or not someone in here is going to raise the issue of the Premier's expenses to travel to the Olympics.

I think Al Palladini was also with him at the same time. I don't know who else accompanied the Premier. I'm sure there were a few more staff people. Maybe there were a few more ministers as well. I didn't follow it all that closely because I thought it was probably legitimate for the Premier to be there, given that Toronto is making a bid for the Olympics. But if we looked at those expenses, they would probably be very high too. I suspect it would probably be pretty unfair to make a comparison between a hotel in Ontario and a hotel in Australia, especially during the Olympics. I'm not trying to defend David Peterson in terms of what he did, or trying to defend the Premier. I do want to put on the record that I know it was expensive to travel and it was expensive—

**Mrs Marland:** Not \$1,000 a night for a hotel.

**Ms Martel:** Let me finish, Mrs Marland. I'm going to put this on the record. When I was minister and travelled to a dimensional stone conference in Verona, the cheapest nights we could find in a hotel—believe me, I had my staff work with Ontario's attaché to find the cheapest—was C\$400 and that was in 1992.

I'm not trying to defend anyone in terms of expenses. Maybe David Peterson and entourage didn't look for the cheapest. Maybe the Premier of this province didn't look for the cheapest when he was in Australia either. But having been in that boat myself and having been very conscious of trying to find the cheapest price, because I sure didn't want it to come back to bite me, there was a huge discrepancy and difference in prices, and that was just the fact.

Having said that, I'm glad to see the government is going to support this bill, because it would have sent a very strange message to the public if the government

were to have come here today and said they weren't interested in accountability. If the government had not supported this bill, it probably would have made the public think the government and its ministers had something to hide. I'm sure that while the Premier is out trying to promote the throne speech across Ontario instead of being here in the Legislature, the government wouldn't want that message delivered when it's trying to do everything it can to deliver a message that it is accountable. That is allegedly one of the three tenets the throne speech is based upon.

We've heard from two different members that the throne speech mentioned the word "accountability"; someone said eight times and someone said 15. I don't know. I didn't go back to count. It doesn't really matter to me that much to go back and give an accurate reflection. But it was mentioned rather routinely by Her Honour and it has subsequently been mentioned rather routinely by the ministers as they've been getting up to answer questions in question period since the throne speech was debated. So there's no doubt that as we continue another debate, the speech writers for the government members are going to throw in that word as many times as they can, and we should just get used to that right now.

1130

It would have been rather bizarre, I think, for the government to come here and say, "We want accountability. We expect it of our transfer partners. Not only do we expect it, but we demand it of our transfer partners. We're going to ensure the Provincial Auditor has an opportunity to actually go and look at the books of our MUSH partners," and then at the same time come and say, "But we will not have accountability, we will not have public disclosure, we will not have a reckoning of ministerial travel and those costs of taxpayers' dollars of people who travel outside the province," assuming they're on business for the people of Ontario.

I think it would be a good thing to take this a step further. If this bill actually goes to committee, I would make the following recommendation to the minister: it's important not only to be accountable and to disclose to the taxpayers of the province the cost of travel by ministers outside Ontario; frankly, I think we should have a very clear disclosure of that travel within Ontario too.

I say that because all of us know, because we all have to do our own travel claims, that there is a very clear line item that is disclosed to the public, rightly so, of MPP travel between Queen's Park and our ridings. That is very clearly disclosed, whether you drive or whether you fly etc, and if you fly, all of the other associated expenses that go with that. Very clearly in our expenses as well there is a clear disclosure of travel within the riding. As you drive around by car, and for some of our northern colleagues, as you fly around by plane, because that's how big how their ridings are, there's a clear disclosure of that cost as well. So our constituents know how much it's costing us to try to do our job. If the constituents don't like it, we're surely going to hear about it.

It's the same principle for ministers as well, because ministers also have to disclose publicly their costs of travel in their own ridings, presumably when they're working as MPPs, and their costs, in their other role as MPPs, to travel from their ridings to here at Queen's Park. But there is no direct line item that reflects the costs of ministers' travels throughout the province. That gets absorbed in the overall global budget of each ministry. I think there's something wrong with that.

I think most travel taken by ministers in the province is quite legitimate. I feel quite confident that is true. But I think the public has a right to know what that cost is. If the government or government minister were not prepared to really disclose that, it would give the public a perception that something was wrong. I don't think that at the same time as the government's promoting accountability, they want that perception to come back and hit them.

I would suggest we amend the bill, if it gets to committee—I make the suggestion to the member—so that we disclose travel of ministers within the province too. You could do the same as is in the bill: have accountability in terms of what has to be reported on; for example, whom the minister met with, what the purpose was, what the announcement might have been etc, so that that's all public knowledge. I think that there is a fair amount of taxpayers' dollars wrapped up in that kind of travel that is never disclosed in a clear fashion because it remains hidden under the global budget of the minister. It's time we changed that. I'll give you an example why.

Two years ago, when our expenses were reported, a member of the media made a rather interesting comparison of travel. This particular member of the media compared the travel for our leader between Queen's Park and his riding to Dave Johnson and his travel as MPP between Queen's Park and his riding. Speaker, you would know that Dave Johnson was close enough to take the TTC from his riding to Queen's Park. So clearly I didn't expect, you wouldn't have expected, and no one would have expected that Dave Johnson would have had a very large claim in terms of his travel between the riding and Queen's Park, and indeed the claim wasn't very high.

Most reasonable people would have expected that the leader of our party, whose riding is the farthest away from this place, where it takes two planes to get to, would have had a slightly larger expense claim for travel than Dave Johnson. Of course, that's the case.

The member of the media, though, never thought about, what was Dave Johnson's travel as minister? Shouldn't we have that disclosed too? Then, perhaps the comparison would have made a bit more sense, would have been a bit more legitimate, would have probably got on the record costs that were a bit more reasonable, because I assume that Dave did travel when he was Minister of Education. I would have encouraged him to do that, like I encourage other ministers to get outside of Queen's Park and get out to the rest of the province to see what's happening.



Based on that experience, I really do think it's time that we had that type of disclosure too. I don't think there's anything unfair about requesting it, because it's already covered within the global budget of the minister. What I think we should do is clearly delineate it, though, allow it to stand as a separate line item that is also included in our expenses as they are outlined to the public when our MPP travel is disclosed.

I don't know what the member from Sudbury thinks about that. I don't know what the government thinks about that. It seems to me, though, if we're talking about ministerial travel generally, whether it's outside the province or inside the province, there should be a way for the public to know what that is.

I say again that I'm pleased to see that the government members are supporting it. If the member can actually get it into committee and it's considered, I just ask them to consider expanding it as well so we cover both kinds of travel and so it's very clear to the public what those costs were, for what purpose, whom the minister met with, and what was the outcome of all of that travel.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I rise today in support of Bill 2, the Ministerial Travel Accountability Act, and I want to thank my colleagues for sharing their time with me.

There are several levels of planning and accountability already in place for ministerial travel which we should inform the public about. Ministerial travel is also reflected in the business plans of the ministries and is subject to a number of accountability mechanisms. These include (1) reporting under the public accounts process; (2) review by the Provincial Auditor and again by the public accounts committee of this Legislature; (3) required government approval of all missions abroad.

Ministry business plans reflect the strategic directions of the government to further Ontario's goals for job creation and a competitive economy. This may include advancing Ontario's international objectives, which can involve international travel.

As you know, all ministries are involved in a rigorous business planning and review cycle, which determines their activities, how they spend taxpayers' dollars and how they achieve set performance measures. Business plans are developed by ministries and approved by cabinet. They are further reviewed by Management Board of Cabinet to ensure that they support the objectives of this government. These business plans are easily available to all Ontarians in hard-copy form from ministries directly or their Web sites.

In addition, the public accounts of Ontario, which are published annually by the Ministry of Finance, provide a detailed accounting of how each tax dollar is spent across the government on a ministry-by-ministry basis. This public accounting is further scrutinized by a review by the Provincial Auditor. In his annual report, the auditor examines the use of taxpayers' dollars and highlights inappropriate use. The auditor's disclosures are all public and receive a great deal of media attention, as we saw

after the release of the auditor's annual report late last year.

We, as the Legislative Assembly, also closely monitor Ontario's public accounts. As you know, all parties are represented on the public accounts committee, which is a standing committee of this Legislature. The terms of reference for the public accounts committee are as follows. As per standing order 106(g), the standing committee on public accounts, in addition to any matter that may be referred by the order of the House, is empowered to review and report to the House "its observations, opinions and recommendations on the report of the Provincial Auditor and the public accounts, which documents shall be deemed to have been permanently referred to the committee as they become available."

**1140**

The combination of mechanisms that have been discussed by those of us on the government benches are put in place to make our government dealing as open to the public as possible.

There's one other point I feel I should bring to the attention of this House. Quite simply, it is important for the people of Ontario to be represented abroad at a certain level. Dignitaries from other countries expect to meet with senior-level officials visiting their countries. Sending members of our cabinet to meet with officials abroad sends a message that Ontario takes what they have to say seriously and that we are there to do business. These types of contacts are valued highly by other countries, just as we value and appreciate when they send high-level officials to meet with us.

I was very fortunate and privileged to meet with the Prime Minister of Italy a month or so back in terms of dealing with his mission to Canada. I think he was here for the G7 and met our Prime Minister in Ottawa, and fortunately he was able to come to Toronto to visit with members of the Italian community.

These types of contacts, as I say, are valued by other countries. However, as my colleagues have also said in dealing with this bill, it's dealing with ministerial accountability, and I observe it's dealing with ministerial accountability after the fact in terms of reporting within 60 days of the particular visit.

Mr Bartolucci, the member from Sudbury, has put out his position, and I've stated mine.

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** The member from Sudbury, Rick Bartolucci, has to be commended for giving us all an opportunity to talk about the issue of accountability generally but also in the context of providing a very practical tool for accountability. We are not talking about accountability in the abstract here; we are applying it to ministerial travel, and members of this House have already expressed their support for it. But let's all realize, at the same time, that the member from Sudbury is leading a charge here on behalf of accountability, and this has to be just the very first step because we know how little accountability we have here.

While I would make the case that there's less accountability under this government than previous governments,

the problem with that argument, of course, is it leads to both sides saying, "You did it in the past," and then we say, "You did it more in the past." We've heard from the member from Sudbury, "Let's forget about the past." Yes, let's forget about the past for the moment, because if we let tradition and the traditions of our parliamentary system drive accountability, then we are really practising the democracy of the dead; we are practising democracy under 1867 rules which just don't apply in the year 2001.

We found ourselves, quite honestly, when we took a step back, it was easy for me and for the rookie MPPs, when we first came here, to see how little accountability there is. We were amazed. We spend hundreds of hours in opposition, preparing for and speaking to debates, preparing amendments only to have them never heard, attempting to hold the government to account in question period and not getting answers. Of course we find out that they call it "question period" for a reason. It's not answer period; it's question period.

We found pretty quickly that, really, one of the last effective means of holding a government to account is through nothing less than an undemocratic means of accountability, the judiciary. That's one way to hold government to check, but that is clearly an undemocratic way of holding the government to check—a necessary way. You have to have a separation between the judiciary and government, but how do we hold government to check? And then it gets worse.

We know the centre becomes tyrannical. No matter what, the government, the first minister's office starts controlling everything and the fight for accountability by both government members and opposition members becomes a losing battle. Today we have an opportunity to fight back in that battle, because you can't argue with legislation. Legislation that requires accountability will get accountability. You can be sure that the voters of your constituency, and I know the voters in my constituency, expect MPPs to hold the government to account and aren't satisfied when told that somebody who works in the First Minister's office is going to deny that because politically it would be harmful to the government.

Well, the government is supposed to be the people's government, so the people should be able to get access to this information. But sometimes we just shrug our shoulders and tell our constituents and get used to it and say, "Well, look, that's just broken politics in this dead democracy that we're in. That's just the way it is. It's part of the game."

Every once in a while you get a glimmer of a change. Here's a glimmer today; here's an opportunity. I'm going on about this opportunity because we all know what's going to happen next. We need the members to come in here and support the member for Sudbury's bill. But we also need to get it to the committee of choice of the member and we need the bill to move forward. This is the fourth time that the member has introduced it. If we are all in agreement here that it should pass, then who exactly should stop it from moving forward? Who?

It must not be somebody who is held accountable to this House and to the people of Ontario. All of this lack of accountability degrades the entire political process. Everybody loses confidence in government and our Legislature if we feel we can't get the answers, if they're somehow hidden. This is one means in which we can get some accountability, and then the people can decide whether or not the expenses made for travel were good or bad. They're not always going to be bad; we know that. They're not always going to be good; we know that too.

So this is our opportunity to hold the tyrannical centre to account. This is our opportunity to fight back against the democracy of the dead. I congratulate the member for Sudbury and all the members in this House who support this bill. Rick Bartolucci, you've done a great thing today.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I also want to say that I think this is a timely piece of business that we discuss here this morning, given, as my colleague from Sudbury east said earlier, this government's, in the speech from the throne and in speeches they have made subsequently out there, talking about accountability, but we know from the last five or six years what they mean by that. They mean that if things go well and there are successes, they're accountable, they're responsible; but if they go wrong and things start to fall apart, then somebody else has to be accountable and somebody else is responsible.

I think it's important that from time to time we get an opportunity to challenge the government on where they're spending their money and how they're spending their money and this whole issue of getting value for dollar—particularly this government, and I think the member from Sudbury has done a valuable service to this place by putting this piece of business on the table this morning.

I'd like to, in the short few minutes I have, focus on just a couple of things. You've heard here already the kind of travel that has happened under the leadership of this government, the flying here and flying there and the issue of whether we get value for dollar for that or not, and others will speak to it. I want to focus for just a second on what they're not doing when they're meeting with all the dignitaries around the world and wining and dining and playing golf and having a good time.

In this province, everybody who is connected in any serious or significant way with the economy knows now that we're moving into some pretty challenging times. The government has benefited from a tremendously positive, driving economy out of the US but has done nothing over the last five or six years to restructure the domestic economy of the province so that we might be in a better position to sustain a downturn in the US economy, to actually hook us into other economies or to make sure that trading between jurisdictions in the province that we govern in fact is healthy, and that each section of the province is taking advantage of the money that was flowing, due to the good economy in the US, so that we might stabilize the local economy and make it sustainable over the long term: a place like the area I



come from, northern Ontario, that has not done well under the present regime, and the economy that has changed so dramatically and stands to probably suffer even more with the downturn in the economy because there has been no significant investment in that part of the province over the last five or six years.

1150

In fact, I would suggest that's probably what's happening in rural Ontario as well. You heard a proposal by this government for rural Ontario. If you look at it, it's a sham; it's a shell. There's nothing there, nothing of any substance. Northern Ontario doesn't even have a strategy in place by this government, and I worry about that.

The other thing I wanted to touch on briefly in the few seconds I have left is the question my colleague from Sudbury east raised about in-province travel of ministers. I'd like to know how much travel this government, by ministers, has done in relation to the very successful fundraisers they've been having across this province over the last five or six years. Every time I turn around, they're having another fundraiser in Sault Ste Marie, and there are another half-dozen ministers coming up, organizing, yes, meetings to which they can go to justify the travel. But I would like to know how much of that is tied directly into actually participating in those fundraising events.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):**

I'd like to speak to Bill 2, which is the Ministerial Travel Accountability Act. Almost all members of the House have referred to the item in the throne speech dealing with accountability and how it's needed in this province. Many of our transfer partners, it has been submitted by this government, need to be more accountable, and I think it's most timely that Mr Bartolucci brings this bill forward to the House. I would hope that all members of the House will support the bill.

Some members have talked about some of the access to this information that already exists. I take the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, who spoke of business plans and public accounts committees and provincial auditors and estimates, those sorts of things. There really isn't too much access to this information. So I think he's right in bringing this forward, other than the brown envelopes that are received from time to time or applications that are made under the freedom-of-information legislation.

It's not as if there is no information available; it is available. Mr Bartolucci is suggesting, of course, that this information be filed with the Legislative Assembly, if sitting, and if not sitting, be filed with the Clerk, who in turn would put it into the Ontario Gazette. That probably is a better process, because the other process is freedom of information. When the NDP were in office, I used to have all kinds of freedom-of-information applications. Some ministries were very good; some were terrible. Sometimes you never heard from them and you had to have an appeal. So it's OK, but really we need to improve on the process.

My friend from Simcoe North talked about the David Peterson junket on which almost everyone of Italian descent on the government side went to Italy, presumably

to appease the Patti Starr scandal that arose. Comments could be made about the Bob Rae government. Comments can be made about this government. The point is that we need to be more accountable, no matter who is in office. I accordingly support the bill.

He does go a little further, though. He talks in subsection (2) about providing "a written summary of the purpose of the travel and of any accomplishments resulting from the travel, including a listing of the benefits in terms of tangible investments and employment opportunities that the travel will bring to Ontario." I raise the question—it may be appropriate that that be dealt with in another forum, a committee or some other forum—whether or not that additional information is too restrictive.

Some of these travel items by ministers aren't strictly done for economic purposes. It may be done for other purposes. I happen to be in the Ministry of the Attorney General. It may be appropriate that the Attorney General may travel outside the province to have discussions on matters that have nothing to do with the economy; it may be that particular minister. It may be that some of these tours—and some of them are tours, very legitimate tours—may be confidential. It may be that for the people who are speaking from other governments the conversations may be confidential.

There's talk in the bill of listing the agreements—sorry, "a detailed summary of the significant terms and conditions of any contract signed during the travel period." It may be that those contracts would need to be approved by cabinet, the Legislature or, in turn, by whatever government is being dealt with.

I do have a hesitation on some of the items from section 2, specifically that it's too restrictive on the government of the day. But certainly the philosophy that ministers need to be more accountable on the expenses that are being paid, that's a good philosophy. If we're saying to school boards, hospitals and other transfer sources that we're providing transfer payments to, "You need to be more accountable," I'm sure the member will agree that what's good for the goose is good for the gander, and that's a fair comment.

Accordingly, I would hope that all members of the House would support this bill. But I do draw it to the member's attention, and perhaps in the few minutes he'll have left he will comment on whether or not it's too restrictive as far as section 2 is concerned.

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I am pleased to speak on this bill brought forward by Rick Bartolucci, the member from Sudbury, because this bill clearly shows the Liberal caucus believes in true accountability by those and from those who serve in public office. From what I have heard, and for the past six years, the provincial government of the day, the Harris Tories, has not had the backbone to bring in a bill that is as clear as this when it comes to accountability, simple accountability on members of the executive council of Ontario to submit to the Legislative Assembly or to the Clerk of the assembly information relating to travel outside of this province.

To me, this is not something that is complex. I don't understand the fact that a government that is moving forward, that has been here for six years, has not had that fortitude. It has had a lot of hammers with a lot of other sectors. I believe the member from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington mentioned that the transfer partners need to be accountable. This is the proof of the pudding, because this bill is about true accountability by those who are on the executive council. If true accountability is what you want—and I'm glad to hear you're going to support the bill, but I'm certainly going to watch carefully to see if this bill is going to see the light of day in committee, because that will be proof if you really, truly believe in accountability and what it stands for.

To me, true accountability means transparency for how and why ministers are spending public dollars in any way, particularly when they are travelling and particularly when they're going outside the province. To me, the purpose of why they're travelling outside the province must reflect doing business for the province of Ontario. I don't mean business in the sense of economic business, I mean business in the context of government business.

One of the things I have watched closely is how often this government berates every ministry and sectors across this province for overspending. "We must cut." This is the "Cut, cut, cut" government. Yet when I did a small check to find out what the cost was for running the cabinet offices in 1995, I found that cost in 1995 was \$7,858,149. I figured, "Well, they've been cutting the Ministry of the Environment by 40%." I went to look because I was expecting to see how much you had cut it and how much you had become more effective, because after all your mantra is, "Smaller government," your mantra is, "Less government, less expensive government." That's why you do everything you do: less expensive government.

1200

What did I find? I found that you had actually more than doubled the cost of cabinet offices, which astounded me. That is irresponsible. There is no other sector in this province that could justify that kind of increase.

You are just like all of the others that you point your fingers at. You have a government that's saying, "Everybody must be accountable. Everybody has got to spend less because we're a tough government and we have to make sure that these ministries can't spend like they used to in the past." What do you do for yourselves? You more than double cabinet offices, the operating costs of cabinet offices. I'd like to see which hospital in this province has doubled its costs. I'd like to see which other administration in this province has doubled its costs. But the Harris Conservatives more than doubled their costs. You certainly used the hammer for everybody else, but for yourselves you have another rule—

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** A double standard.

**Ms Di Cocco:** —a totally double standard. Those figures are your figures, they're not mine.

In my estimation, this bill reflects what the clear position is of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus about open, honest government. I am appalled at hearing the members from the Harris government consistently pointing fingers to everyone else. You have to clean up your own act first before you try to point fingers at others. I will be watching carefully to see if you mean anything about accountability when we move this bill forward and when it goes to committee and when it comes back to the House for third reading.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I'd like to thank all the members on both sides of the House who have spoken in support of the bill. I think the members who have offered some constructive suggestions—for example, the member for Dufferin-Peel—certainly bring some good information that must be considered.

I look forward to the passage of this bill at second reading, and then I look forward to a full, rigorous debate with meaningful amendments. I believe it is wrong for us and it is a disservice to the taxpayers of Ontario to look back and throw stones. I believe we must move forward today with establishing meaningful legislation.

The purpose of the debate is to ensure that there are amendments that will make the bill even stronger. It is, though, the foundation from which I hope strong legislation will be put in place.

At this time, I'd like to thank my intern, Rachel Sheer, for the enormous work she has put in, in anticipation that this bill will be referred to committee for debate. I want to publicly thank her. She personifies excellence. Thank you very much, Rachel.

I would suggest that all of us, when the time comes, support the legislation. I will be asking that it go to the general government committee, and I would ask the Chair of general government to call the bill quickly. Our order table is pretty free, pretty open. It is the appropriate time to make this type of legislation, enshrine it in law for the present government and for future governments.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This completes the time allocated for debate on this ballot item.

#### SAVING FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE ACT (INCOME TAX AMENDMENT), 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'ÉPARGNE EN PRÉVISION DE L'AVENIR DE NOS ENFANTS (MODIFICATION DE LA LOI DE L'IMPÔT SUR LE REVENU)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** We will now deal with ballot item number 1. Mr Hastings has moved second reading of Bill 4, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide a tax credit for contributions to registered education savings plans. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.



MINISTERIAL TRAVEL  
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR L'OBLIGATION  
DE RENDRE COMPTE  
DES VOYAGES MINISTÉRIELS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** We will now deal with ballot item number 2. Mr Bartolucci has moved second reading of Bill 2, An Act respecting Accountability for Ministerial Travel. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell. We will deal first with Mr Hastings's Bill 4.

*The division bells rang from 1206 to 1211.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Would members please take their seats.

SAVING FOR OUR CHILDREN'S  
FUTURE ACT (INCOME TAX  
AMENDMENT), 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR L'ÉPARGNE  
EN PRÉVISION DE L'AVENIR  
DE NOS ENFANTS (MODIFICATION DE LA  
LOI DE L'IMPÔT SUR LE REVENU)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Mr Hastings has moved second reading of Bill 4, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act to provide a tax credit for contributions to registered education savings plans. All in favour will stand and remain standing until their name is called.

**Ayes**

Agostino, Dominic  
Amott, Ted  
Baird, John R.  
Barrett, Toby  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Beaubien, Marcel  
Bisson, Gilles  
Bountrogianni, Marie  
Boyer, Claudette  
Bradley, James J.  
Bryant, Michael  
Caplan, David  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Churley, Marilyn  
Clark, Brad  
Cleary, John C.  
Clement, Tony  
Coburn, Brian  
Colle, Mike  
Cordiano, Joseph  
Crozier, Bruce  
Cunningham, Dianne  
Curling, Alvin  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Dombrowsky, Leona

Duncan, Dwight  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Ecker, Janet  
Elliott, Brenda  
Galt, Doug  
Gilchrist, Steve  
Gill, Raminder  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hastings, John  
Jackson, Cameron  
Johns, Helen  
Johnson, Bert  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Marchese, Rosario  
Marland, Margaret  
Martel, Shelley  
Martin, Tony  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Maves, Bart  
Miller, Norm  
Molinari, Tina R.  
Munro, Julia

Mushinski, Marilyn  
Newman, Dan  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Peters, Steve  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Ramsay, David  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sampson, Rob  
Smitherman, George  
Spina, Joseph  
Stewart, R. Gary  
Stockwell, Chris  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Tilson, David  
Tsubouchi, David H.  
Tumbull, David  
Wettlaufer, Wayne  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wood, Bob  
Young, David

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 74; the nays are 0.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr Hastings:** I move that Bill 4 be directed to the standing committee on general government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Hastings has asked that this bill be referred to the standing committee on general government. Agreed? Agreed.

MINISTERIAL TRAVEL  
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR L'OBLIGATION  
DE RENDRE COMPTE  
DES VOYAGES MINISTÉRIELS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Mr Bartolucci has moved second reading of Bill 2.

All those in favour will please stand and remain standing until their name is called.

**Ayes**

Agostino, Dominic  
Baird, John R.  
Barrett, Toby  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Beaubien, Marcel  
Bisson, Gilles  
Bountrogianni, Marie  
Boyer, Claudette  
Bradley, James J.  
Bryant, Michael  
Caplan, David  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Churley, Marilyn  
Clark, Brad  
Cleary, John C.  
Clement, Tony  
Coburn, Brian  
Colle, Mike  
Cordiano, Joseph  
Crozier, Bruce  
Cunningham, Dianne  
Curling, Alvin  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Dombrowsky, Leona

Duncan, Dwight  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Ecker, Janet  
Elliott, Brenda  
Galt, Doug  
Gilchrist, Steve  
Gill, Raminder  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Hastings, John  
Jackson, Cameron  
Johns, Helen  
Johnson, Bert  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Marchese, Rosario  
Marland, Margaret  
Martel, Shelley  
Martin, Tony  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Maves, Bart  
Miller, Norm  
Molinari, Tina

Munro, Julia  
Mushinski, Marilyn  
Newman, Dan  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Peters, Steve  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Ramsay, David  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sampson, Rob  
Smitherman, George  
Spina, Joseph  
Stewart, R. Gary  
Stockwell, Chris  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Tilson, David  
Tsubouchi, David H.  
Tumbull, David  
Wettlaufer, Wayne  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Young, David

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please stand and remain standing until their name is called.

**Nays**

Wood, Bob

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 72; the nays are 1.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I ask that this be referred to the standing committee on general government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the bill being referred to the standing committee on general government will stand.

All those opposed will please stand.

A majority is not in favour of the bill being referred. Pursuant to standing order 96, the bill will be referred to the committee of the whole House.

All matters relating to private members' public business now being complete, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1220 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** Bill 132 was introduced in April with no consultation, no prior warning, no discussion in the Legislature on a Friday when students were in exams or had already gone home for the summer. There was not even a line in the Blueprint on private universities.

Bill 132 was rammed through the Legislature with three days of public hearings. The only reassurance that was offered to students was the fact that a quality assurance board would be established to oversee the process, to monitor applications by private universities but also to oversee the implementation of applied degrees in colleges. A chair has finally been found for the board, but it still lacks membership.

The colleges in Ontario were promised the ability to offer applied degrees. They have set up their agreements, they have hired the additional staff required and they are prepared to move ahead. But they have yet to receive the green light to move ahead with these trial projects.

I have spoken to representatives of the college system: presidents, vice-presidents, students and their industry partners. This holding pattern is quickly becoming unsustainable. They cannot wait until August 30 to be given the go-ahead to offer an applied degree and be able to fill the program and offer a quality education.

Post-secondary education is not like a Jell-O mix, where you add water and stir. This government seems to believe they can introduce something like private institutions, new types of degrees and let it all sort itself out in the mix. This is our future, the future of our children. Our competitiveness and prosperity are in the balance. When can the colleges expect to know when they can offer these programs?

### VOLUNTEERS

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** In recognition of International Year of the Volunteer and, in Canada, National Volunteer Week, I rise in the House today to thank and acknowledge all the volunteers across the province who devote their time and effort to volunteerism in their communities. I would also like to particularly thank the volunteers in my riding of York North who give so much of their time and energy to make our community a better place to live.

Currently, there are over 7.5 million volunteers in Canada involved in 180,000 not-for-profit organizations that make up Canada's voluntary sector. These people are

committed to improving the quality of our lives. They are found assisting seniors with shopping, organizing fundraisers, teaching English as a second language or volunteering for a political party. In my riding of York North, thousands of volunteers give their time to hundreds of different organizations.

This week honours those who make a difference. Last night in my riding of York North, the township of King celebrated and recognized the commitment of volunteers who work hard to improve the quality of life for the residents of King. Many will tell you they volunteer to take on new challenges, to share knowledge and abilities, to feel good and build self-esteem and to have fun. I believe it is very important to recognize our volunteers, because they are key players in holding together the fabric of our communities.

### HIGHWAY TOLLS

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** Yesterday the Premier of Ontario outlined a proposal and idea for adding tolls to existing highways across the province. These highways have already been built and paid for by the taxpayers of Ontario.

Every day in my community of Hamilton, tens of thousands of people commute back and forth between Hamilton and Toronto on the QEW. This would mean a toll, a user fee, an additional payment for those people for highways they have already paid for.

We're not sure who to believe here, because this morning on Hamilton radio the Minister of Transportation, who represents Stoney Creek, wasn't quite as committed to toll roads on existing highways as the Premier. So is the Premier right? Is the Minister of Transportation right? Is this government going to go ahead with this silly idea of tolls on already built highways? It is an additional tax that you are imposing.

You've also committed in the past to ensure there is always an alternative. Does this mean that if this toll on the QEW goes ahead, the good people of Burlington and Oakville and who live out on Lakeshore Boulevard and in Mississauga will be imposed on with the additional traffic of the alternate road? Is Lakeshore Boulevard through those neighbourhoods of Oakville, Burlington and Mississauga going to pick up the additional traffic?

This government's got to come clean. Is it the position of the Minister of Transportation that he's opposed to tolls on existing highways, or is it the position of the Premier, who wants to tax and gouge Ontarians again with another toll, another tax for a road they have paid for already?

### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I'm pleased to rise and inform the House about an extremely successful event that took place in my riding. On Tuesday, April 24, the city of Woodstock had the pleasure of hosting Lieutenant Hilary M. Weston at a community volunteer



summit. Her Honour helped celebrate National Volunteer Week, which runs from April 20 to 27. Her Honour spoke eloquently of volunteerism and youth in Ontario and presented special International Year of Volunteers plaques to the mayors of all the municipalities as well as student council representatives from the county's secondary schools.

The summit and volunteer week were a tremendous success because of the hard work of groups such as the Volunteer Network of Oxford County, which consists of 30 community agencies that utilize volunteers throughout Oxford county. The volunteer network works to enhance and promote volunteerism through organizing workshops, volunteer fairs and special events. While countless people work very hard organizing volunteer appreciation week, I'd like to specifically thank Kimble Sutherland of the United Way of Oxford; Terry McCartney, chair of the Volunteer Network of Oxford County; and Irene Priest of the VON.

As part of the community volunteer summit, I had the honour of leading a presentation on the Ontario's Promise initiative. During the presentation we had the pleasure of hearing from John Lessif, of McDonald's restaurants in Oxford county; Deb Landon, executive director of the Ingersoll Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Wendy Perry of the early years challenge fund; and Curt Harnett, three-time Olympic medallist and representative for the Sport Alliance of Ontario. All the speakers demonstrated the value and inspiration one attains from volunteering in their community.

#### FARM PRACTICES PROTECTION

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** I rise today to call on this government to immediately introduce the much-promised and overdue agricultural operations act.

Nearly a year and a half ago the wheels were set in motion: two rounds of consultations, a promise to table the legislation last fall, and still we have seen nothing. The throne speech said provincial standards were necessary, but we were warned that they should not eliminate local responsibility. This is doublespeak for more downloading.

I am warning this government: don't you dare abdicate your responsibility to Ontarians.

This is what we can look forward to if the government continues to drag its feet. A farmer in west Perth is appealing an OMB decision to impose limits on the size of his farm. Why? The justice wisely argued that "the province has legislation governing normal farm practices that overrides municipal power." The ruling was that "no municipal bylaw may restrict a normal farming practice." The justice said there is no proof that randomly imposing caps on livestock units has any environmental benefit.

This scenario will be acted out time and again—our judicial system will be clogged with appeals, unnecessarily dragging farmers into court—until this government takes immediate action and shows strong leadership by

tabling a fair agricultural operations act with the proper capital funding.

If this government wants a strong rural economy, it must ensure there is a strong agricultural engine to drive it. Table the legislation and start flowing the necessary improvement dollars now.

#### SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** This is a piece of that infamous fence in Quebec City that everybody is talking about, a base of that fence. Yes, I went to the wall, and although I did not engage in any violence I was tear-gassed along with many thousands of other peaceful protesters: grandmothers, young children, youths, workers, Canadians, Americans, Mexicans. Everyone of all stripes, colours and shapes joined together to send a message to governments across the Americas. The message was that the people would not tolerate backroom trade deals that put corporate profit ahead of human rights, ahead of protecting the environment, ahead of protection for workers, ahead of social programs.

I was there to engage in peaceful protest, but let me tell you when I walked down to where the conference was taking place and saw that dreaded fence, I was infuriated, and so I went there. That fence is a symbolic barrier, a barrier that sees government shutting out the voices of the people.

For those who say that we elect a democratic government and that they therefore have the right to make those decisions, let me say this: you only have to look at the end of apartheid in South Africa and at the civil rights movement in America to see that it has been mass social movements by which, in spite of the actions of elected officials, the world has changed, and changed for the better. If it weren't for Rosa Parks standing up to those elected officials and the law, she might still be sitting at the back of that bus.

I say right on, and congratulations to the thousands and thousands of people who went to Quebec City to fight the tyranny and the absolute secrecy in which this is being done.

1340

#### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It is a pleasure once again to pay tribute to volunteer organizations in my riding of Simcoe North in this, the International Year of the Volunteer, and National Volunteer Week.

On Tuesday evening I was able to attend the banquet of Hospice Huronia. Over 60 people were recognized for their work in the Midland-Penetanguishene area and received Ontario Volunteer recognition pins. I thank president Bev Gerow and her volunteers who have made Huronia a better place to live.

Tomorrow I will be attending a volunteer appreciation luncheon at the Trillium Manor, a home for the aged and

long-term care facility in Orillia. We will congratulate and thank the dozens of volunteer workers who give so much of their time in assisting the staff and families in making life more comfortable and caring for the residents of Trillium Manor. I appreciate the efforts put forward by administrator Sharon Turner and her staff in recognizing the value of volunteers.

On Saturday, over 60 OPP officers, auxiliary officers and board members of the Ontario Education Leadership Centre will gather to do a spring cleanup of the camp at Longford Mills. The Ontario Education Leadership Centre is home to the training facilities of the over 850 OPP auxiliary officers in the province. As well, the camp graduates over 2,000 young leaders for tomorrow. I thank Mr Terry Harkins, the leader of both the OELC and the OPP auxiliary, for organizing this event.

Again, in this, the International Year of the Volunteer, I appreciate the efforts put forth by all volunteers to make our province such a wonderful place to live, work and raise families.

#### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** How many people in this province know that the Ontario Legislature was not in session from the third week of December until the third week of April—a full four months of empty chairs in our provincial Parliament. How many Ontarians know that in 1999 Premier Harris allowed the Legislature to sit for only 39 days, and that since the provincial election in June 1999 their elected representatives have been in the House only 124 days?

Elected representatives, to do their job appropriately, should be permitted to raise in the provincial Parliament the important issues of the day for the province and their own constituencies. Premier Harris has prevented the opposition from holding him accountable in the House by refusing to allow the Legislature to sit for any significant length of time.

Can you imagine the outrage and furor in Ottawa if the federal Liberal government had announced that the House of Commons would not come back in January, as it did, but in late April, as was the case with this Parliament? The Reform-Alliance hound dogs, the National Citizens' Coalition, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and the Ottawa press gallery would be in a huge uproar, and cries of arrogance and dictatorship would abound.

The democratic system works best when elected representatives are debating, discussing and questioning in the legislative body to which they were elected when the head of the government and the ministers are present to be accountable to elected members and their constituents. The contempt of the Premier for this Legislative Assembly is so very apparent today.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Members' statements? Members' statements? The member for Sudbury.

#### GOVERNMENT TRAVEL EXPENDITURES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Today was an example of how responsible this government really is to the people of Ontario. Today this government had an opportunity to support meaningful legislation with regard to ministerial accountability when they travel. This is what this government did: this government chose to pass it on second reading and then bury it in committee of the whole. I suggest to you, the members on the government side, that you have done a disservice to the people of Ontario through your flagrant abuse of Parliamentary order. I would suggest to you that you have to be accountable to the people of Ontario. You have to tell the people of Ontario how much money you are spending when you travel out of province. You have to tell the people of Ontario when this Premier travels out of the province or out of the county, who he's going with and how much money it's costing. We want to make sure that you, me and every Ontario taxpayer gets the best bang for the buck.

I'm telling you that by you burying this legislation deep in the holes of the committee of the whole, you will pay the price at the polls next time, because the working families of Ontario want accountability. Dalton McGuinty, the Ontario Liberals, believe in accountability to working families. You don't and you will pay the price.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Thank you very much. I'm afraid the time is up for statements. I did call it a couple of times, to the member. I also apologize to everybody. I understand that I should have just carried on and not had another member's statement. There shouldn't have been another one and I apologize for that. I'm sure Mrs Bartolucci is watching and thought it was great, but I'm afraid we did pass it and we can't continue on. I apologize, but I did call it a couple of times.

The member for Mississauga South.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I'm apologizing, Mr Speaker. I missed the rotation and I would ask for unanimous consent. It's not a political speech; it's about congratulating volunteers. I would ask for unanimous consent to deliver that statement.

**The Speaker:** Unanimous consent? Agreed.

#### VOLUNTEERS

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I appreciate this opportunity, Mr Speaker, to acknowledge a very special designation, National Volunteer Week.

In Ontario we have over 2.9 million people who donate their time each year to some area in their community. Do we realize that if volunteers were paid the average service sector wage, volunteerism would be Canada's largest industry in terms of that salary paid? Whether it's driving a vulnerable senior to a medical appointment or sharing a few hours each week with a disadvantaged youth, the people of Ontario are dedicated



to building a better tomorrow. It's the people of Ontario who are making that happen.

My constituents in Mississauga South are fine examples of this outstanding commitment to community. I am always proud and moved by the fact that so many are willing to work throughout our churches, hospitals, community centres, sports and arts programs, all of which truly make a difference. With the time I have today I cannot identify all the groups that contribute to our community such as the Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides, our local cable station volunteers like Rogers Cable 10, the Volunteer Centre of Peel, the hockey teams, the baseball leagues and countless others.

We are all indeed indebted to the generosity of these people with their personal time.

### CONSIDERATION OF BILL 13

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I have a very important announcement. I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 69(b), the House leader of the third party, the member for Niagara Centre, has notified the Clerk of his intention to file a notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 13, An Act to resolve labour disputes affecting the Toronto District School Board and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board.

The order for second reading of Bill 13 may therefore not be called today.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Can I just try and clarify this? Because the third party has filed that amendment or motion—it's a motion? It can't be a motion.

**The Speaker:** It's intent.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Intent, fine. That means that the second reading to get the kids back to school in Toronto and Windsor would now not commence until Tuesday of next week—could it be properly called by the House?

**The Speaker:** Just to clarify—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The Minister of Labour might want to know this information. What can happen is it can be called Monday unless this was an intent to file a motion, unless by noon on Monday they filed the actual amendment, then it would not be able to be called at that time. But it is only the intent to file, so it could be called on Monday if the third party motion is filed by noon on Monday. You might want to pass that on to the third party House leader.

1350

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** To further clarify—and I appreciate the liberty you're extending me—by filing that motion today, they've in fact deferred debate for today. So ultimately, they've slowed the process down by at least one day, and if they filed the intent, they would ultimately slow the process down by two sessional days.

Well, OK, thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** You made it sound like it was my fault. I just want to be very clear to my good friend the labour

minister, who I'm sure wouldn't want to be putting that point. For those of you who do want to take a look at it, it is under a standing order, and I will remind everybody, as I have often done, that I don't write the standing orders, I enforce them, although I suspect this may be one that may be changed in the future. It's pursuant to standing order 69(b), if the House leaders of all three parties want to look at it.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I've just been also notified that there has been an opposition day filed by the NDP for next Wednesday, which would have to be debated on Wednesday. I would seek unanimous consent of this House and all sane, reasoned and thoughtful people to give me unanimous consent that we defer that debate for Wednesday so we can actually debate the bill that gets kids back to school in Windsor and Toronto. I would expect any reasonable person to accept that.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

### MEMBER'S PRIVILEGE

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Earlier today, the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, Mr Colle, provided me with a written notice of privilege as required by standing order 21(c). I would like to thank the member for giving me sufficient time to carefully review the matter.

I wish to advise that I will be deciding on this matter without hearing further directly from the member at this time, as standing order 21(d) permits me to do.

The member's point of privilege relates to difficulties he has encountered in attempting to obtain property assessment information for properties within his electoral district from the Ontario Property Assessment Corp, OPAC. The member alleges that OPAC's lack of co-operation in this matter has frustrated his ability to carry out his duties as an MPP and therefore is a breach of privilege.

In similar previous instances, and as recently in this House as October 16, 2000, Speakers have consistently found—supported by the procedural authorities and a multitude of precedents—that privilege is attached only to members' parliamentary duties, and not to subsidiary duties away from Parliament.

Citation 92 in the sixth edition of Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms* states, "A valid claim of privilege in respect to interference with a member must relate to the member's parliamentary duties and not to the work the member does in relation to that member's constituency."

The matter raised by the member for Eglinton-Lawrence clearly relates to activities outside of this chamber and are unconnected with the member's parliamentary duties.

Therefore, I find that a *prima facie* case of privilege has not been established, and I would hope that the member and the appropriate minister would work out some of those differences. I thank the member for his submission.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (RESTORING PEACE IN OUR SCHOOLS), 2001

### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION (RÉTABLISSEMENT DE LA PAIX DANS LES ÉCOLES)

Mr McGuinty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, Act to amend the Education Act to restore peace in our schools / Projet de loi 16, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation pour rétablir la paix dans les écoles.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The leader of the official opposition for a short statement?

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** Yes, briefly. My bill recognizes that there are really three parties essential to the resolution of the ongoing disputes in Windsor and Toronto. My bill would enable us to resolve those disputes quickly and fairly.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to seek unanimous consent to move a motion that the House sit tomorrow to discuss Bill 13.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Unanimous consent? Agreed.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Before you get too excited, that was to allow the motion to be presented. Now we have to have the motion.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I move that the House come back tomorrow to finish second and third readings of Bill 13.

**The Speaker:** The government House leader has moved that we come back tomorrow to debate second and third readings and vote on Bill 13. At what time, if we could clarify that?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** At 1:30 of the clock.

**The Speaker:** Just so we're clear, I'll try to be slow. We usually have this written down, and this time we don't. The motion is—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I'll proceed while you discuss it. It is a motion. Basically what it says is that we will come back tomorrow at 1:30 of the clock to debate second and third readings of Bill 13.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.  
I'm sorry, only four members rose. The motion is carried.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker:** I've never seen anybody so happy to come in to work in all my life—a standing ovation.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS (continued)

### ONTARIO NATURAL HERITAGE ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR LE PATRIMOINE NATUREL DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Gilchrist moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to ensure responsible and acceptable development and to protect the natural heritage of the Province of Ontario / Projet de loi 17, Loi visant à assurer l'aménagement judicieux et acceptable du territoire et à protéger le patrimoine naturel de la province de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** This bill would defend the Oak Ridges moraine by ensuring that every aspect of that land feature, which has been designated by the Ministry of Natural Resources as an area of natural and scientific interest, would be protected from any development.

But the scope of the bill goes far beyond the Oak Ridges moraine and amends the Conservation Land Act to prohibit any authority from permitting development on any wetland or area of natural scientific interest greater than two hectares anywhere in the province.

The bill will strengthen official plans to show support for the thorough work done by municipal governments to frame the best possible use of land in each community, and allows the imposition of development charges for the acquisition of parkland, but prohibits the imposition of development charges on brownfield sites to facilitate the redevelopment of commercial and industrial land that is currently sitting idle.

In total, this bill goes a long way toward defending our natural heritage and the rights of citizens to determine the long-term planning of our communities.

1400

### FRANCO-ONTARIAN EMBLEM ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'EMBLÈME FRANCO-ONTARIEN

Mr Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to recognize the emblem of the Ontario French-speaking community / Projet de loi 18,



Loi visant à reconnaître l'emblème de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):**

Le projet de loi reconnaît officiellement le drapeau de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario comme emblème de celle-ci. The bill officially recognizes the flag of the Ontario French-speaking community as the emblem of the community.

As most of us are aware, Ontario, most precisely Ottawa, will be hosting the francophone games in July. Also in July, Windsor will be celebrating the 300th anniversary of the French arrival in Ontario. Therefore, it would be appropriate at this time to officially recognize the emblem of the French-speaking community.

#### ONTARIO STUDENT LOAN HARMONIZATION ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'HARMONISATION DES PRÊTS D'ÉTUDES DE L'ONTARIO

Mrs Cunningham moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The minister for a short statement?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** The purpose of this bill is to allow the Ontario government to join other jurisdictions in finding an alternative way of delivering student loans in light of the fact that national banks are withdrawing from student loan programs later this year.

The act, if passed by the Legislature, would allow the Ontario government to put new financial and administrative arrangements in place to ensure that Ontario student loans are available to students as of August 1, 2001. It would also provide the Ontario government with the authority to enter into an agreement with the federal government for joint administration of the Canada and Ontario student loan programs.

#### TOWN OF NEWMARKET ACT, 2001

Mrs Munro moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr9, An Act respecting the Town of Newmarket.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

#### PREMIUM AUTO COLLISION INC. ACT, 2001

Mr Hastings moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr7, An Act to revive Premium Auto Collision Inc.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

#### GOOD SAMARITAN ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LE BON SAMARITAIN

Mr Gilchrist moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to protect persons from liability in respect of voluntary emergency medical or first aid services / Projet de loi 20, Loi visant à exonérer les personnes de la responsabilité concernant des services médicaux ou des premiers soins fournis bénévolement en cas d'urgence.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** This is generally known as the Good Samaritan Act. I'm sure many of the members will recall that in the last Legislature we held a debate during private members' hour and this bill made it to third reading. Unfortunately, it died on the order paper. The bill will protect health care professionals and other individuals from liability for negligence in respect of services they provide in certain circumstances to persons who are ill, injured or unconscious as a result of an accident or other emergency except, of course, if they cause damage through gross negligence.

#### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF

Mr Smitherman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to amend the Executive Council Act respecting an institution of democracy in the Legislative Assembly / Projet de loi 21, modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil exécutif concernant une institution démocratique de l'Assemblée législative.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** This builds on the principle of accountability spoken of in last week's throne speech. It adds a new section to the Executive Council Act. Under the new section, if at the

end of a legislative session a minister of the crown has not attended 60% of the oral question periods held during the session, \$100 must be deducted from the minister's salary for each occasion by which his or her attendance fell short of 60%.

#### WYCLIFFE COLLEGE ACT, 2001

Mr Smitherman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr2, An Act respecting Wycliffe College.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 86(a), this bill stands referred to the Commissioners of Estate Bills.

#### PROTECTION OF CHILDREN INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ENFANTS QUI SE LIVRENT À LA PROSTITUTION

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 22, An Act to protect Children involved in Prostitution / Projet de loi 22, Loi visant à protéger les enfants qui se livrent à la prostitution.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The purpose of the bill is to protect children under 18 who are involved in prostitution. The bill gives police officers the power with a warrant to apprehend a child involved in prostitution and return the child to his or her family or to place the child in a protective safe house. A police officer may also apprehend a child without a warrant where the child's life or safety is seriously and imminently in danger.

The bill makes it an offence for a person to encourage a child to engage in prostitution. The penalty for the offence is a fine of up to \$25,000 and imprisonment of up to 24 months, or both a fine and imprisonment.

1410

#### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (YOUTH PROTECTION), 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (PROTECTION DE LA JEUNESSE)

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to require a driver's licence to be suspended if a motor vehicle is used when purchasing sexual services from a child / Projet de loi 23, Loi modifiant le Code criminel pour qu'il exige la suspension du permis de conduire

d'une personne qui utilise un véhicule automobile alors qu'elle achète les services sexuels d'un enfant.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Section 41 of the Highway Traffic Act provides for the suspension of a driver's licence of a person who is convicted of committing specified offences while using a motor vehicle. The suspension is for one year for the first conviction. The bill adds to the list of offences in subsection 41(1) of the offences under subsection 212(4) of the Criminal Code of Canada relating to purchases of the sexual services of a person under the age of 18.

#### MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT (ADULT ENTERTAINMENT PARLOURS), 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS (LOCAUX DE DIVERTISSEMENT POUR ADULTES)

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to amend the Municipal Act with respect to adult entertainment parlours / Projet de loi 24, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités à l'égard des locaux de divertissement pour adultes.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Among other things, the bill prohibits a person licensed to operate an adult entertainment parlour from employing a person who is under 18 years of age or who does not hold a licence to work or perform or provide services in that parlour.

The bill also amends the definition of "adult entertainment parlour" to include premises from which dates, escorts or nude or partially nude dancing is arranged for a fee and in which telephone, electronic or Internet sex lines are available.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask the indulgence of the House to consider moving second and third reading of the Good Samaritan Act that I introduced a few minutes ago, recognizing that we had all-party support for the bill in the last Parliament.

Just a week and a half ago, Minister Newman and I were witnesses to an accident right in front of this building. A car came off the sidewalk and ran over a woman in front of the Frost Building. We were very fortunate that an employee of the Toronto Hospital attended at the scene and gave immediate first aid, but under the current legislation he would theoretically be exposed to liability if, even with the best of intentions, he had done anything that had caused any negative consequences to that victim.

I would ask for unanimous consent for second and third reading of the Good Samaritan Act.



**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

The consent was to move it, and now you have to move second reading of it.

### GOOD SAMARITAN ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LE BON SAMARITAIN

Mr Gilchrist moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to protect persons from liability in respect of voluntary emergency medical or first aid services / Projet de loi 20, Loi visant à exonérer les personnes de la responsabilité concernant des services médicaux ou des premiers soins fournis bénévolement en cas d'urgence.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Any debate? No further debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Gilchrist moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to protect persons from liability in respect of voluntary emergency medical or first aid services / Projet de loi 20, Loi visant à exonérer les personnes de la responsabilité concernant des services médicaux ou des premiers soins fournis bénévolement en cas d'urgence.

**The Speaker:** Any debate? Seeing none, that is carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we proceed, we have in the Speaker's gallery some honoured guests. We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery a parliamentary delegation led by the Honourable Jozef Migaš, president of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. Mr Migaš is joined by Mr Miroslav Mikolášik, the ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Canada. Please join me in welcoming our special guests.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### EARLY YEARS CENTRES

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Last Thursday, the Lieutenant Governor told this House that step 12 in our government's journey into the 21st century is to provide a plan "to support parents and ensure children get the best possible start in life."

Dr Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain, who co-authored the Early Years Study, presented a new way of thinking about child develop-

ment. In that study, Mustard and McCain make the point that recent advances in neuroscience represent a major leap forward in our understanding about the importance of early brain development in children.

Notre gouvernement est extrêmement fier, our government is very proud of the work we have done to date to support parents and children in this province. In the first phase of the implementation our children's agenda, we launched the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program, a service that reaches mothers and newborn children across the province. The preschool speech and language program was another key element of our first-phase initiative.

In the second phase, Ontario built on this foundation by commissioning the groundbreaking research of the Early Years Study. We then launched five demonstration projects and the beginning of the early years challenge fund. At the same time, we established Ontario's first-ever early intervention program for young children with autism and enhanced children's mental health services right across the province. In Ontario, we are leaders in providing services and supports to children, and we are determined to remain so.

Nous sommes des chefs de file dans le domaine de la prestation de services et de mécanismes de soutien aux enfants, et nous sommes déterminés à le rester.

The third phase of the Mike Harris government's children's agenda proposes to establish a system of local early years centres across the province that will help build stronger communities, that will help support parents in their important roles, and that will give children the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

One of the main objectives in creating the early years centres is to help prepare children for lifelong learning. To do this, we will build on what's working in communities in order to help parents ensure that when their son or daughter gets to school, they'll arrive ready to learn.

We want parents to have choice and flexibility at the early years centres. We want these centres to be a place where parents can go to find the answers to the questions they may have about their child. The centres will serve as a focal point for communities, allowing different groups and agencies to come together and work with parents to support their children. It will be important to parents that the early years centres serve as a valuable resource. As such, they will offer a mix of universal supports that address common needs across the province, like literacy programs, nutrition programs and parenting courses. In addition, these centres will include other targeted services tailored to meet the unique needs of local communities, such as supports for children with special needs.

Given what we know today about early brain development, this sets the foundation for learning, behaviour and health throughout one's life. The Harris government is eager to continue to move forward with the implementation of the early years agenda.

Following the budget on May 9, we will come forward with the next phase in our early years plan and specific details on how we will use the national children's agenda

funding to improve the lives of Ontario's children. It's encouraging, I want to say, to see that the federal government is joining the Harris government in addressing the important needs of children.

None of this agenda would have been possible without the very hard work and dedication to the early years initiative by my predecessor and good friend, Ontario's first minister responsible for children, the Honourable Margaret Marland.

Enfin, j'aimerais remercier, and finally, I would like to thank the early years task group and co-chairs, Dr Robin Williams and Philip Donne, for their advice and commitment to the children and families of Ontario. We appreciate the time and effort that they invested, along with the members of their group. Their contribution has been invaluable.

1420

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Nothing we do as a society is more important than the education of our children. It's key to our prosperity as a province, and it gives our young people the knowledge and skills they need for success in today's competitive world.

The key elements of our education plan to reform our publicly funded education system are: fair funding focused on students, more resources in classrooms, a new and more rigorous curriculum, regular tests to show how well our students are doing, standard report cards and a stronger voice for parents in their child's education. All are about increasing quality and accountability.

During the last election, our government's Blueprint document outlined our commitments to continue our plan for quality reform. We've been meeting those commitments, doing what we said we would do, but also listening to the advice from our education partners on how best to succeed.

For example, we believe that one foundation for quality education is teaching excellence, and we're implementing a comprehensive teacher-testing program. We recognize that Ontario has many excellent and dedicated teachers, but we need to work with our partners to ensure that all teacher training is as consistent, effective and rigorous as it needs to be.

To ensure our schools are safer, more respectful places to learn, we've passed the Safe Schools Act. It gives new authority to teachers to suspend and principals to expel for a variety of disruptive behaviours and serious infractions. It includes participation in strict discipline programs for students who are fully expelled and mandates criminal background checks for all school employees who have regular access to students.

Because our government believes in educational accountability and a performance-based education system, we are implementing standardized province-wide testing of student achievement. Recent test results show we were right to stress basic skills and higher standards

in the new curriculum, but while showing we've made progress, they also clearly show there is much more work to do.

Our plan has put the system on a path that is entirely new and different. We've taken difficult decisions, necessary decisions to create an education system where excellence, achievement and accountability are the highest priorities.

Last week's throne speech promised additional steps to ensure flexibility and choice in education and continued support for high education standards and performance-based accountability. These commitments set the stage for the next steps in education reform, which I'm announcing today.

A secure supply of trained and capable teachers is critical to the education of Ontario's young people. To accomplish this, the government will work with the Ontario College of Teachers and the Ontario Teachers' Federation to develop an action plan to recruit the finest candidates to the teaching profession in Ontario.

Parents, students and taxpayers also need the assurance that all teachers are doing the best job possible. Therefore, we will continue our implementation of our teacher-testing program to ensure all Ontario teachers have the up-to-date knowledge and the skills they need to help our students reach their full potential.

The government also believes it's essential to provide more choice to parents in making decisions about their children's education. However, our government also respects that some parents choose to educate their children at home. To assist these children in getting the educational supports they need, we will eliminate the institutional bias against home schooling and will facilitate home school parents' access to our standard tests and other learning tools.

Ontario's new curriculum sets more rigorous standards for what is to be taught and what is to be learned in our schools. We recognize that some students need extra help in order to achieve. The government will require that our schools are providing students who are falling behind with the extra support they need to catch up and to meet those standards.

To ensure that Ontario's students have the skills and knowledge they will need, the government will require that schools promote only those students who do achieve at an acceptable level.

Standardized student testing helps measure where we are making progress and where we need to improve. Recent test results prove that there remains much room for improvement in our education system. To help parents and teachers judge how well students are learning core subjects, the government will expand standardized testing to all grades and will be making further announcements about that later.

Continuous improvement is key to increasing student excellence and achievement. In order to ensure that our schools are improving, the government will require that school boards set targets for improving student achievement and that plans be established to help low-



performing schools and school boards, and we will recognize and encourage schools that demonstrate sustained or significantly improved student performance. Again, we'll be making further announcements about this.

Starting in November 2001, the government will launch annual surveys to measure parent satisfaction with the education system.

Finally, this government believes in the value of innovation and bringing new ideas to meet the challenges of education. Therefore, we will explore ways to encourage creative, groundbreaking school models such as the proposed regional centre of excellence for skilled occupations in Ottawa.

This government has now been focused on education reform in Ontario for almost six years. Our government is staying the course. The challenges of education reform are many, but we believe the cause and the objective is right. We are making progress. We are realizing the promise of education reform, but much more needs to be done.

In the week of May 7 to 11 we will all be celebrating Education Week, which is an opportunity to recognize the dedication and hard work of all our education partners, from parents, students and teachers to staff. Many members representing our partners are here today in the galleries of the Legislature.

The theme of this year's Education Week is Excellence in School Performance, Excellence in Student Learning. That theme accurately summarizes the goals of our government's plans for education quality reform. I look forward to continuing to work with our education partners in order to achieve this. Our students deserve nothing less.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** We heard in last week's throne speech that this government places great importance on having the skilled workforce necessary to attract investment and jobs and, in so doing, keep Ontario's economy flourishing. To help achieve this goal, I'm pleased to report that our ministry has already introduced a number of measures that make excellent use of public funds and give Ontario students the high-quality education they need to find employment.

We are committed to ensuring that every willing and qualified Ontario student secures a place in a post-secondary education program. As part of our plan to meet that commitment, we, with our partners, are strengthening our publicly funded colleges and universities through a \$1.8-billion SuperBuild commitment to create 73,000 new student spaces. We will be providing students with increased choices in flexible, relevant programs through new applied degrees at colleges and the potential for new private degree-granting institutions to set up in Ontario.

We are increasing accountability by measuring and reporting on key factors such as student graduation rates and the percentage of our graduates who in fact find jobs.

These are key components of our plan to ensure Ontario students receive the highest quality education and training programs, which will give them the skills and education they need to find good jobs.

Now I'm pleased to reveal further elements of our plan. The government will introduce a new charter for our colleges. This would reform the governance model of Ontario's colleges to allow them to become more flexible, entrepreneurial, responsive and market-driven. It will support the strategic skills investment program to address critical skill shortages with the goal of producing a skilled workforce in strategic sectors that attract investment.

The government will, of course, help attract the world's best and brightest to Ontario by helping our foreign-trained professionals qualify for employment and meet skills shortages.

To assist our students in acquiring the skills and experience they will need to find jobs, the government will require that all secondary school students have access to work experience. These initiatives will build on programs and policies that our government has already put in place.

The government began to expand spaces at colleges and universities through the access to opportunities program—we refer to this as ATOP—that was announced in the May 1998 budget. During the first three years of ATOP, the government made a \$228-million investment to create 23,000 new spaces for students in hi-tech programs. This has been well-received by our students and by our business community.

1430

Of course, not every graduate of our secondary schools chooses to attend a post-secondary institution. To ensure that workers have the relevant skills in the right quantity that employers need to compete in the new economy, the government has introduced new initiatives to prepare students for the workplace. The Passport to Prosperity program, launched in 1999, is a unique partnership with industry that encourages more employers to provide high school students with hands-on training through workplace experiences. Over the past three years, the \$50.8-million Ontario summer jobs strategy helped 179,000 students find summer jobs. We look forward to the same success rate with employers and students this summer. We have more than doubled the funding for our Ontario youth apprenticeship program, referred to throughout Ontario as OYAP, which helps students start an apprenticeship while still in high school—a very popular program, very practical and something that has been long overdue in Ontario. Ontario's new Apprenticeship and Certification Act, proclaimed in January 2000, is expected to double the number of people entering apprenticeship programs from 1998-99 levels of 11,000 people.

I would also like to point out that in all we have done, accountability for the use of public funds has been of the

utmost importance. We have taken action to increase accountability for tax dollars that are given out as student loans. For several years now, we have required post-secondary institutions with high default rates to share in the cost of loan defaults. We now also require colleges and universities to make available to the public information on their performance in key areas such as student and employer satisfaction and the employment rates of graduates, to name a few. This year for the first time, a portion of the institution's operating grant was allocated based on their performance in these areas.

I am very confident that our plan for post-secondary education, which we continue to improve upon, will prepare our students for a productive future and will ensure that Ontario has the skilled workforce necessary to attract investment and jobs in the 21st century.

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I want to speak to the Minister of Education's statement today and, at the same time, to the Premier's speech delivered a short while ago. It has become perfectly apparent to all objective parties that public education in Ontario is in a mess. There is simply no other way to put it. We have schools without enthusiasm, we have students without extracurricular activities, we have parents experiencing a tremendous loss of confidence in what is happening to their children's education.

The minister tells us today that essentially she's going to impose more obligations on school boards and on teachers to get it right. I think it's important to take a long, hard look at the record. The fact of the matter is that the Mike Harris government has had its hands on public education for close to six years now, and the results are in. In addition to those things I've just described, half of our children are failing to meet the basic standard in reading, writing and mathematics. That's according to this government's own standardized test. In addition to that, we have recently learned that one third of our grade 10 students are failing to meet the basic literacy standard. These are this government's results. Those children are producing in that way, not as a result of their own failings, but as a result of the failings of this government.

The throne speech recently delivered in this House made ample reference to responsibility and accountability. It seems to me that this government better start to take responsibility for what's happening in public education and specifically with respect to what is happening to the test results for Ontario's children.

Working families want this government to begin to understand that, first of all, putting money into education is an investment and not purely an expense, as this government sees it. We've put forward a comprehensive plan that is designed specifically to bring about improvement in student learning. That's what it's all about at the end of the day.

Here are some of the details of that plan. First of all, we believe in public school choice and the government has cherry-picked this particular aspect of our plan. I congratulate them for that, but they're missing, as usual, the big picture. Here's some of the rest of it. We think if we're going to bring about real improvement in student learning we've got to start by reducing class size in the early grades. We believe that there should be a hard cap, a real cap on class sizes for those children between the ages of four and eight. That's junior kindergarten through to grade 3. Studies tell us that if children get more individual attention up front they experience remarkably better success academically, both at the beginning and later on in college and university, they are better behaved and better and more productive citizens. We believe we should have smaller class sizes.

We also believe that we should be recognizing much of the excellence that can be found in public education today. To listen to this government, you would think that there was nothing good happening anywhere and has never happened at any time in the history of this province when it comes to public education. So we've put forward a lighthouse school program that would recognize excellence in schools in whatever facet that might manifest itself. If a school has some kind of excellence, we would give some additional funding to that school on condition that they share those best practices with other schools, the intention being to lift all schools in the system up.

The other component to our plan involves turnaround teams. We recognize that there are some schools that are experiencing some difficulties. We would lend a hand. We would want to offer some assistance. So we would create these turnaround teams, which would be designed to support schools which are having problems. They'd be people of expertise—educators, principals and others—who are well informed in the matters of bringing about improvement in our schools. The overall thrust of our plan is to bring about improvement in all of our schools.

The government, as we understand it, is cherry-picking another idea today. They want to bring about this notion of some perverted form of lighthouse schools where they're going to give money to schools if they perform well. Our plan specifically is designed to ensure that schools get additional money if they're doing well and on condition that they use that money to support other schools. It's all about lifting all schools up.

### EARLY YEARS CENTRES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Children's advocates have been waiting on pins and needles for this government to announce something good for children in the province today. Many of them are here in the gallery hoping for good news. They've been waiting patiently as this government announced and re-announced and re-announced again a \$30-million Early Years challenge fund that never seems to go anywhere and, I'm sad to say, isn't going anywhere today.



They've been frustrated that this government has slashed licensed child care funding across the province. The direction has been to starve quality licensed child care by cutting funding by 15% and by downloading responsibilities on to cash-strapped municipalities. This government has cut \$43.41 per child per year from licensed child care. Waiting lists for subsidized child care keep growing throughout the province and the pressures on the province's child care system are greater than ever.

In Niagara, we talked to a single mom who had to leave her job because subsidized, licensed child care wasn't available for her two children.

In Kingston, that community is so cash-strapped from provincial downloading it may have to close one of its two municipally run child care centres, even though 273 children are waiting for subsidized child care in that city.

Here in Toronto the waiting list for subsidized child care has grown to over 14,490 children this year because this government refused to help fund Toronto's plan to open up 2,000 new spaces.

1440

We've been waiting to hear what this government plans to do with the \$844 million it will receive from the federal government for early years development over the next five years, and \$114 million of those federal dollars have been sitting in Ontario's coffers since April 1 and this government has refused to say what it will do with that money.

Today the government claims it will open up early years centres in the province. Well, six years ago when this government took office there were early years projects underway. This government cancelled them and still, though we've heard the announcement and the re-announcement and the re-announcement, nothing has happened to reverse that decision.

The reality is that this government has ignored the recommendations from its own early years study, which it commissioned Dr Fraser Mustard to write. This government has ignored the recommendations from its own Education Improvement Commission, which says the government should invest in full-day junior and senior kindergarten throughout the province.

If you really care about kids, take the \$844 million the federal government is flowing for early years development, match or even better the funding and create the seamless, integrated series of child care and family resource centres that Dr Fraser Mustard talked about when he called for better early years education in Ontario over two years ago.

#### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Then we have the Minister of Education. At a time when more and more people across the province are worried about the state of our public education system, at a time when they want to see a vision from this government, at a time when they know that \$1.5 billion has been taken out of the funding of elementary and secondary education in

this province, at a time when people are crying out for a vision, what do we hear today? No vision, just a series of announcements and re-announcements, many of which are further aimed at penalizing and going after people who are already having a hard time in the education system.

It's interesting that the Fraser Institute completed a study that purported to rank schools in Ontario. This government, if you believe the Premier, thought that was a good idea. Now we find that the Fraser Institute has had to withdraw their report because it was inadequately researched and contained information that was frankly false, not true.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Hampton:** That's the road that this government is on, and I can tell by the protests of the government members that they think this road promoted by the Fraser Institute is somehow going to better our schools. The reason there are so many labour disputes in our education system, the reason there is so much turmoil, is because the government continues to underfund the system, continues to vilify teachers, continues to attack the system rather than come forward with a plan to invest and improve.

So these are very disappointing announcements today, just more re-announcement, no substance.

#### WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Consent for each party to take five minutes to speak to the day of mourning.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** This Saturday is the national day of mourning for workers killed and injured on the job. This is an important opportunity to honour these workers and also to recommit ourselves to workplace health and safety.

In recent years, a consensus has emerged that workplace health and safety is far too important to be played with as a partisan tool or bargaining chip. Employers and employees, whatever their other differences, are increasingly united in the drive for safer workplaces.

The same goes for this chamber. Each party has held the responsibility of government and knows the sadness and sorrow that each workplace fatality brings to family, friends and loved ones. I think former Ministers of Labour here today would agree that there is no more empty or futile experience than reading about another preventable tragedy in the morning accident reports.

In Ontario, our health and safety record continues to improve each year. We are headed in the right direction, but more needs to be done.

One achievement of which I am most proud is the work we did last year to protect workers from exposures to hazardous substances. This will no doubt lead to fewer occupational illnesses down the road. The key is prevention.

Shortly after taking office, we gave the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board a broad new mandate to focus on the prevention of injuries and illnesses. The board took its new mission to heart. It now stands at the centre of a health and safety system completely dedicated to preventing injuries and illness before they happen.

In just the past few years, young worker health and safety has emerged as one of the most serious and challenging issues facing society today. The trends are undeniable. The injury rates of young workers are consistently higher than the rest of the working population. The health and safety system is moving to protect these workers and prevent future tragedies. It's an issue that cuts across all partisan and political boundaries. I know first hand of the tireless efforts offered by many of the members in this House, including the member for Peterborough with respect to the health and safety concerns he's brought to me; the member for Thunder Bay in the Liberal caucus has also been pushing very hard for health and safety records in the north; and of course the member from Sudbury, who has worked very diligently with the health and safety work community in her riding.

So, I welcome the continuing interest and input of honourable members—

**Interjection:** Sudbury East.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:**—Sudbury East, I'm sorry. Thunder Bay-Superior North and young worker health and safety was the particular comment I was making. I hope for his advice and counsel as we develop new initiatives in this area.

Education and information are key. We worked tirelessly with the Ministry of Education to get health and safety instructions into the high school curriculum, and we were successful. This instruction is now being carried out using the Live Safe! Work Smart! resource materials, which also includes strong support materials for high school teachers. We're working to get health and safety awareness into elementary schools.

We've also established the Young Worker Health and Safety Advisory Panel. This panel of dedicated stakeholders will ensure that no angle goes unexplored in our drive to make the working world safer for our young people.

This year, the focus of North American occupational safety and health is again on young workers. Starting Sunday, May 6, activities will take place across the province highlighting the importance of health and safety for young workers. That's a timely focus given that the first of the thousands of young people have already started their summer jobs. Still, programs, pamphlets and information can only achieve so much. It is crucial that employers and parents devote the time and energy to making sure that young workers know the hazards they will be dealing with. Nothing can replace personal, hands-on contact and interest. A combined approach of prevention, inspection and enforcement has helped make Ontario workplaces among the safest in the world.

On just one personal note, it's very important for all those parents today whose children are going out to work

for the summer—for the first time potentially or even the second or third time—to talk to their children before they go to work and tell them, "If you believe you're entering an unsafe work area, don't do it." It's very important, crossing all political boundaries, that parents speak to their kids and say, "You have rights in your workplace. Don't put yourself in a position where you could cost yourself your life."

These efforts will continue, but right now I ask you to join me in honouring all those who have been killed or injured on the job. After every party has spoken, we'll ask for a minute of silence for those who have died in the workplace.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed? Agreed.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to those men and women who have died or have been injured in the workplace across the province of Ontario and across this country.

April 28 is significant as the designated day of mourning. This day commemorates the date of April 28, 1914, when this Legislature passed the first Workers' Compensation Act in the province of Ontario. Although much progress has been made since 1914, much more still needs to be done.

The statistics of workplace injuries and deaths are staggering. In the past 10 years, 4,261 men and women have died on the job as a result of workplace injury or disease. In 1999 alone, 409 men and women lost their lives as a result of workplace injury or disease. Over 358,000 Ontarians were injured on the job in 1999. Those are staggering, sobering statistics for all of us. Each one of those statistics was someone's father, someone's son, someone's mother, daughter, brother, sister. Each one of those people were folks who went to work in the morning thinking they would come back to their family at the end of the day as they had left. Unfortunately, more than one per day last year did not come back to their family. Unfortunately, 350,000 of them were injured on the job in Ontario.

**1450**

Young people, as the minister mentioned, have to continue to be a particular focus of everything we do. Many of these tragedies, unfortunately, have included young people, young people who held full-time jobs; 16- and 17-year-olds who went to work at part-time jobs while they were in school.

Beyond each person there's a tragedy and there's a story, and there's a human component to each statistic and each individual we talk about. The human cost is beyond understanding. The suffering, the pain, the agony, the loss of dignity, the stress, the family breakups, the poverty: these are all the hidden prices that families and people pay in Ontario as a result of workplace injury and death.

I can speak of this from first-hand experience. I remember, as a young boy, my father going to work in the morning and kissing him goodbye, and the next time I saw my father was in a hospital in a wheelchair, where he



spent the last 30 years of his life as a result of a workplace accident—30 years of pain and agony and suffering, unable to do the things he had done for the first 33 years of his life. So I certainly understand, I think as all members of the House do, the price that is paid when someone is injured on the job, the price that they and the family pays when someone is killed in the workplace.

I think we all have a special responsibility today to commit ourselves: every death, every accident that occurs in Ontario in the workplace is one that can and should and must be prevented.

We have much to do in this. I believe more education is essential. I believe more training for workers is essential. There has to be more responsibility placed on employers to ensure that they provide safe workplaces for Ontarians, and Ontarians must be educated to understand that they have the right to refuse unsafe work, because, at the end of the day, their health and safety, the well-being of their family and being there to take care of their family becomes more important than any job or any task that they undertake.

Today, as we salute and mourn and pay tribute and honour to those men and women who have given up their lives as a result of simply going to work and those hundreds of thousands who have been injured as a result of simply going to work and trying to take care of their families, we owe it, all of us, to commit ourselves to doing everything we can in a non-partisan way on all sides of this House to try to prevent every death, every tragedy, every injury that occurs across Ontario. We owe it to all of them. We owe it to their kids, to their families, to ourselves, as responsible Ontarians, as responsible government.

I certainly know that my caucus commit themselves to that. I know the two other parties in this House hold the same commitment, and I hope that today begins another effort and that when we stand up here next year we can proudly state that the number of dead and injured in Ontario has gone down, that fewer families, fewer people, fewer Ontarians have suffered the tragedy of workplace death or injury.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** We pay tribute today to the memory of all those who have died in workplace accidents or from occupational disease. On April 28 we remind ourselves that it is important to continue to mourn the dead and to fight for the living. As you know, there has been official observance of the day of mourning in Ontario since 1988, when the Ontario Legislature passed a resolution introduced by the opposition NDP.

All of us here can be proud that something that began in this House has spread not only across Canada; the day of mourning is now recognized in Australia and even by the United Nations.

Today, in the year 2001, I am honoured to speak on this issue. We all know that even one workplace death is too many, and we cannot rest until we are assured that everyone is safe from danger on the job.

Three years ago, when I stood with friends in Hamilton to mark this day, I said that in the first 10 years

since the tradition of the day of mourning began in Ontario we saw a steady decline in the annual totals of deaths and injuries recorded in Ontario, from almost 300 deaths in the workplace in 1988 down to below 200 in 1997. Two hundred workplace deaths is still 200 too many. But unfortunately, since 1997, we have been moving in the wrong direction again. I regret to say that in 1999 the number of workplace deaths in Ontario increased to 231. Last year it increased again, to 243. But far more importantly, the rules that govern our workplaces are changing in a way that I believe will further increase the likelihood of workplace accidents and even the number of deaths and will reduce the ability of workers to make their workplace safe.

In the very near future we'll face a reality in which workers will be forced to work 60 hours a week, to work 12 days straight without even one day off, to give up the right to a half-hour lunch break in the middle of their shift and lose the right to an unbroken annual summer vacation. Is that cause for concern? Yes. I believe it will lead to more accidents and more deaths in the workplace.

The laws in Ontario have also changed with the specific purpose of making it easier for employers to get rid of trade unions, the very organizations that have done more than anyone else to bring safety to Ontario workplaces. Employers are now required by law to post information in the workplace to instruct workers about how to decertify their trade union. Is that cause for concern? Yes. Our history tells us it will increase the likelihood of accidents if unions are not in the workplace.

There is also a proposal to force the merger of various labour tribunals—these are like informal courts for workers—to fuse them into a megatribunal. That includes the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal. That means that fewer cases will be heard and the ones that are will be ruled on by single arbitrators instead of a three-member panel and will be decided by people with less expertise than we now have. So the ability of workers to seek justice on health and safety matters will be diminished. Is that cause for concern? Yes, it is. Will it add to the likelihood of more workplace accidents? Our own history says it will.

My friends, while we organize and fight for the living, it is fitting that today we observe a moment of silence in memory of all those who lost their lives on the job in Ontario. Our thoughts are with their families and friends. But before we do, I ask everyone in this Legislature to think very carefully about the coming changes I have mentioned and to consider these things from the standpoint of what impact they may have on health and safety in the workplace—the likelihood of more workplace accidents and deaths—and ask yourself what the numbers will be next year. How many more workers will die on the job in Ontario and how many more will be seriously injured, and are we really doing everything we can to reduce the likelihood of more accidents?

**The Speaker:** Would all members and our friends in the galleries please join us and rise in a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, everyone.

1500

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

My question today is for the Minister of Education. Yesterday our party put forward a plan to get the children in Windsor and Toronto back in the classroom. Today we've incorporated that plan into a bill. I hope you have had the opportunity to give it some attention. It would appear that the pressing matter, when it comes to Windsor and Toronto, has been or will shortly be resolved. You should take no credit for that, Madam Minister, nor should the Minister of Labour. To do so would be like the arsonist claiming credit for helping put out the fire.

The fact of the matter is that you have sown the seeds which have led to this discord and will continue to lead to discord throughout the province as contracts come to an end and new ones have to be negotiated.

My bill is very simple. It recognizes there are really three parties that are essential to the resolution of any of these disputes. Will you support my bill, which will have the effect of resolving these matters quickly and fairly both now and into the future?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** It is better late than never with a bill—and perhaps the honourable member is interested in taking credit. We over here are not interested in debating who takes credit; we're interested in getting the kids back in the classroom, which is certainly what we've been trying to do.

I appreciate the honourable member is attempting to assist in resolving this labour problem, but how do you legislate to encourage someone to agree to do something? We've already had both parties wrestling with all the options open to them: binding arbitration, all those different things that are available to them under the labour legislation. They didn't agree to do that. His bill is not going to make them agree to do that. That is why this government has put forward back-to-work legislation to get those children in the classroom. It has simply not been fair to those kids to have them out.

**Mr McGuinty:** There have been 60 work stoppages on the watch of the Mike Harris government. There is every reason to believe that our working families will have to suffer through dozens more between now and the end of this government.

I'll tell you why my bill is necessary. Your government now controls not only how much money boards receive, but you tell them in specific detail how they are going to spend it. They don't have any flexibility, in any real sense of the word, to manage their negotiations. That's why we need your government at the table if

there's going to be a real effort on your part to make sure our families don't have to suffer through more work stoppages.

That's what my bill is all about. It recognizes that in order to resolve these things into the future, as long as the rules you put in place obtain, it's going to be essential that we have three parties at the table when it comes to binding arbitration: you with the money, the boards and the workers. Will you support my bill?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, your bill does not put them at the table with binding arbitration. That's the first thing. Secondly, let's be very clear that, yes, Bill 160 tied the boards' hands from raising property taxes to pay for whatever they wanted. Boards have been asked to live within a budget. The honourable member's policy—his proposal is that he wants school boards to go back to taxing, so we're not asking boards to respect taxpayers' money, to live within budgets. He is suggesting they should be able to tax again and increase property taxes for senior citizens and all those folks who are out there. We don't think that is right. We ran promising the voters we would protect them from those kinds of uncontrolled property tax increases. We have indeed done it.

The other thing is, where was he on April 12 when I announced over 310 million new dollars to school boards in a local priorities grant? They have the flexibility to put that according to local priorities.

**Mr McGuinty:** A couple of matters to set the record straight. First of all, the monies you recently gave to our school boards were less than what was necessary and in keeping with the cost of living and growing school enrolment. So don't take any credit for doing something you in fact did not do.

Secondly, to make it perfectly clear, we have no intention of allowing the school boards to raise taxes at the local level. Let's be very clear about that.

Finally, it is pure fiction to suggest our school boards have any real flexibility today when it comes to bargaining with their employee groups. They don't have that flexibility. You tell them not only how much money they're going to get; you tell them specifically how to spend it. You're telling them in no uncertain terms that you have no faith in them whatsoever to do their job.

I would recognize that they have certain abilities and they've been elected by people at the local level and ought to be entrusted, at a minimum, with deciding how the money should be spent.

Again, if we're going to ensure that we don't have to subject our working families and their children to work stoppages dozens of times over between now and the end of your government when it comes, mercifully, I'm asking you to support my bill.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** He's asking me to support something that will not resolve those labour disputes, with all due respect.

Let's be clear. The honourable member is now telling us he is not going to let school boards raise taxes. Their policy is to scrap Bill 160. That is the control that says



school boards cannot increase taxes, so maybe it's one part of 160 he wants and another part he doesn't.

He also said he wanted to scrap Bill 74. Let's be clear. Bill 74 says school boards have to take special education money and spend it only on special education. What he is proposing is we should let school boards spend special education dollars on, what?

We also say in Bills 74 and 160 that classroom dollars, money for teachers in a classroom, for schools, for textbooks in a classroom, can only be used in a classroom, but he is opposed to the very legislation that does that. Maybe he would like to let school boards—God bless school boards, but maybe he'd like to let school boards use classroom dollars for, what?

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** New question.

**Mr McGuinty:** The question is to the Minister of Education. I would remind her, as she looks at herself in the mirror in her capacity as Minister of Education, to remember that, on this government's watch, one half of Ontario children are failing to meet the basic standards in reading, writing and mathematics. That is undeniable and that's pursuant to her own standardized tests.

Working families understand that tax cuts alone just won't cut it. They will not do enough on their own to ensure that our province is competitive. On behalf of working families, I ask you, will you take a dime out of every dollar that you're planning in new tax cuts for your well-connected friends and invest that in education by making our class sizes smaller, with a real cap of 20 students between junior kindergarten and grade 3?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, we've taken more than a dime. We increased money last year for education, we've increased it again this year for education, net new dollars above and beyond enrolment.

But the honourable member, the flip-flopping here is absolutely breathtaking. After opposing our legislation that brought in standardized testing, he didn't want testing. We wanted testing because we knew our kids were not getting what they needed, and you didn't believe us. You didn't agree that these reforms were needed, that the curriculum and the testing were needed. Well, they certainly were and the tests prove it. They show that our kids were not getting what they needed. That's why we brought in the new curriculum.

His solution to this problem? He wants to water down the high standards in the curriculum. That is exactly the approach that got us into this mess in education in this province.

**Mr McGuinty:** You talk about bringing us into this mess. I want to remind the minister, one half of Ontario children are failing to meet the basic standard in reading, writing and mathematics, all of this on Mike Harris's government's watch, six long and painful years.

If you are really committed to improvement in student learning, to making sure we have better measurable outcomes, then you should invest in smaller class sizes for our children between the ages of four and eight, junior kindergarten through to grade 3. Research tells us, and you know this, if we give our children more

individual attention, especially during the early years, they will perform better academically at the outset, and later on they'll be better and more productive citizens.

Why won't you take just one dime out of your tax cut and commit it to a hard cap on classes of 20 students in the early years?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, the new curriculum only started three years ago, and do you know what? It took three years to get ready. It's been phased in over three or four years. Now we're saying the reason we did the new curriculum is because we knew what our kids weren't getting—we knew what those test results were going to show. That's why we put in place the new curriculum. Now he's suggesting that somehow or other it should have been brought in faster. I mean, really.

**1510**

Now he's claiming he is concerned about small class sizes. Again, this party has pledged to scrap Bill 160. Bill 160 is the first piece of legislation that started to put limits on the average class size. He was opposed to it. In Bill 74 last year, we brought that average size down again. We invested \$263 million of taxpayers' money in class size, not only at elementary. I agree, smaller class sizes are good also in high school, which he's ignoring right now. He opposed that legislation. Now, after opposing it all, he says he's in favour. Where does the Leader of the Opposition stand on these matters?

**Mr McGuinty:** I'll remind the minister that she still hasn't answered my question and I'll remind her of her government's record. We have an unprecedented number of work stoppages—60 so far. We have 75% of Ontario's high school students who are being deprived of their extracurricular activities. We have one half of our children, according to your standardized tests, who are failing to meet the basic standards in reading, writing and mathematics. We have one third of our grade 10 students failing to meet the basic literacy standard. That, Madam Minister, is your record and you're going to have to live with that.

We are trying, on behalf of Ontario's working families and our future prosperity, to clean things up, at least just a little bit. We're asking you to simply commit 10% of a tax cut that you would otherwise commit to your well-connected friends. We ask you to commit 10% to making class sizes smaller for our youngest children between junior kindergarten and grade 3. Will you devote that money to that important investment?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member doesn't want to take yes for an answer. We put new money in last year, we put new money in again this year, and I hope we can put new money in again next year, money above and beyond school enrolment.

Are there work stoppages? Yes, there are work stoppages out there. Do you know why? Because, for the first time, the school boards are having to live within a budget. We are saying to our education partners that, difficult as it is, they have to have respect for taxpayers' dollars, as we do. So yes, they're having to live within a budget, yes that is difficult, but we are protecting our

property taxpayers out there, the senior citizens and those that have it.

Secondly, you said we didn't need to test those grade 10 kids. We said we did because we knew they weren't getting what they needed. Those grade 10 kids were in elementary grades when they should have been learning to read under your government's watch. What were you doing with the curriculum when they should have been learning to read? They need those skills. That's why we've brought in a new curriculum. Your solution is to water down the curriculum, water down the standards—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, we've seen how determined you are to force through your draconian legislation which will affect employees at the Toronto board of education and the Windsor separate school board, and we've also seen how willing the Liberals are to help you with that.

But, Minister, I ask you: have you read the legislation? Have you read that the arbitrator need not have any experience in arbitration, that the arbitrator need not have any record for neutrality, for fairness? Have you read that the legislation essentially doesn't provide for an arbitrator who would have the confidence of the workers and the board of education? Forcing that kind of unbalanced, unfair legislation into this kind of labour dispute is only going to lead to a worse situation. Why would you want to do that?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I'd refer this to the Minister of Labour.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** Yes, of course I've read the piece of legislation and it's very simple. If you're suggesting that either of the two arbitrators that have been appointed don't have a wealth of experience and vast knowledge in labour relations, you're sadly mistaken. If you're suggesting that should something unfortunately happen to one of those individuals in the period of time while they're arbitrating, we have the flexibility to appoint someone quickly so the arbitration process could finish. We would also appoint someone equally as qualified as the two individuals we have appointed. If you want to talk about the two people who have been appointed, I ask you, give me one example of either individual who you do not consider to be highly qualified to do this job and I will have that debate, but until you do, I don't think there's any debate to be had.

**Mr Hampton:** We did do some inquiries about the individual you want to name in the Toronto Board of Education dispute and I think you have to acknowledge that very recently this individual was actually doing the labour relations work for the Toronto board. Not only that, he has done the labour relations work and been a labour relations adviser to the Ontario trustees.

When the person you want to name as arbitrator has obviously been very recently conducting business on behalf of one side in the dispute, how can you expect they will have the confidence of both sides? How can

there be a perception of coming to the arbitration with an open mind, with a sense of independence, with a sense of credibility for both sides?

I ask you further, since that's the scenario you've created, do you not recognize that you can further poison, further upset the working relationships more than your government already has and create an even worse working environment in those schools than already exists with the legislation you've passed already?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** If there was a thread of consistency in your argument, it might be worth entering into a debate. The first question you asked me was, "You have the potential to appoint somebody who doesn't have any experience in this field," and your second question was, "How can you appoint somebody with so much experience in this field?" What is the consistency? Mr Raymond is a respected arbitrator. Yes, he's worked in the field. It would seem to me that he'd have a pretty good understanding of how to arbitrate a binding arbitration process because he's worked in the field. He's been at the Ontario Labour Relations Board as a vice-chair, a neutral I might add, got called to the general committee to be reviewed by the appointment process and the opposition party said he was eminently qualified and a very bright individual with a very strong curriculum vitae.

All I can say to you, Mr Hampton, is, do you want me to appoint people with this kind of history, this kind of knowledge, this kind of intelligence? Then I did. I think he's a reasonable person. If you have an exception, give me an example of one decision he's made as a neutral that would not be considered reasonable.

**Mr Hampton:** The minister tries very hard to miss the point. We have a tradition in this province, and frankly a tradition across all the provinces in Canada, that when there are contentious issues at the bargaining table, the arbitrators who are appointed do not have a long history of having acted recently for one of the sides. What you've done here is appoint somebody to be the arbitrator who until very recently was in effect giving the labour relations advice to the Toronto Board of Education. How can you expect the workers to have any confidence in that situation? How can you expect that there would be any perception of fairness and justice?

I'm not asking you whether this individual is a reasonable person. He may be a very reasonable person. But you can't go around the province appointing to arbitrations people who until very recently were acting for one of the sides and expect that it's going to have any credibility and expect that the workers who have to be submitted to this are going to go through it with any sense that they're being treated fairly.

That all impacts back on our schools and our workplaces. That's the point here. The board has said that they don't want your process. The board said that. The union has said that they don't want your process, that they would rather you leave them to work out the difficulties, as they've been trying to do. If you really want to help, put back the money you've pocketed, which now



amounts to \$17 million, during the course of this labour dispute and then you'd really be doing something—

**The Speaker:** Minister?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Let's be clear. We don't want to enter into this process either. We would rather see a collective agreement at the local level. But unlike your party that says, "Leave the kids out as long as it takes. Leave them out for a couple of months if that matters to you, leave them out, don't make a decision, don't show leadership"—we could be like the Liberals and try and tickle them into a negotiation and say, "Here's a little resolution we're going to pass that's got no authority in law, no binding ability to bring the parties together, but we'll do this because we'll bump and nudge them together and the kids can stay out for a couple of months, as well."

No, we did not want to get involved in the process, but there comes a time when you have to take some leadership. You've got to show that you represent parents and children and bring parties together, force them into binding arbitration, open schools and get kids back in them. Yes, we didn't want to become involved, but if we need to we will, and that's called good leadership.

1520

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My second question is for the Minister of Energy. We asked the Minister of Energy earlier this week about the announced 8% increase in hydro rates and the soon-to-come further increase in hydro rates, and we asked him if he was concerned about the loss of jobs and the impact this was going to have on Ontario industries.

Today, Minister, I want to ask you about a specific case. The Abitibi Consolidated paper mill in the city of Kenora has announced that it is not going to be working for the next two weeks. When the manager of the mill was asked why this is, he referred specifically to the following: one of the main reasons for the shutdown is high energy costs, including the government's recent increase that will cost this mill an additional \$3.7 million. Then manager Dave Kerr said that any future increases, "could put us out of business."

There are over 850 jobs tied to this mill, but this is just the tip of the iceberg, because we're talking about a whole industry here.

Minister, in promoting your agenda of privatization and deregulation of hydro, which is going to lead in the same direction that it did in California and Alberta—higher prices—how many jobs are you prepared to sacrifice in Ontario?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** The increase that we announced recently affects all Ontarians and it has nothing to do with introducing competition into the electricity marketplace in this province. In fact, we think competition will bring us the best guarantee of the lowest possible costs in the electricity sector and consumers will benefit over the long run.

It has everything to do with both the Liberal Party in this province and the NDP in this province doing nothing about the ever-increasing and staggering, today, \$38-billion debt of the old Ontario Hydro. That's where the money of the increase will go, toward the debt, and also, about \$1 billion that we have to spend to further improve the environmental record of the electricity sector in this province and Ontario Power Generation. That's where the money is going. It should have been dealt with under the two previous governments but, sadly, they did nothing. There's no other explanation than that.

**Mr Hampton:** I thought we'd already settled this issue. You told this Legislature a year ago that debt repayment was already part of the Hydro bill, that in fact a substantial amount of Hydro debt was already being paid down because it's part of the Hydro bill. This recent announcement about a rate increase has nothing to do with debt repayment. It's all about your corporate energy friends telling you that you've got to get the rates up for them so that when they come in and buy, they can make a sizable profit. That's what it's about. You have to ask yourself, again, how many jobs are you prepared to sacrifice? Because it's not just the pulp and paper industry.

Falconbridge, with 2,000 employees in Sudbury, has notified you that what amounts to a 14% industrial rate increase for them is putting jobs at risk there. Since we know further rate increases are coming, how many jobs are you prepared to put at risk across Ontario just to suit your private sector corporate energy friends who want the rates up before they buy in? How many jobs are you prepared to sacrifice, Minister? Because they're coming, and they're going to come more and more often. Tell the people, how many jobs?

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Time's up. Minister?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Yes, 35% to 40% of people's hydro bills goes to paying off debt. In fact, what the auditor showed us in his special report in January is that that wasn't enough money to actually—it's like a mortgage on the house. We were paying principal and interest. Where you're supposed to pay principal and interest, a little bit each month, we were barely paying the interest. In fact, we were \$647 million short last year, as the auditor correctly pointed out, because we've spent \$2 billion—and I don't know what part of this honourable member doesn't understand, because I've answered it before—\$2 billion over the last few years improving the environmental record, which is the top priority in the energy sector. The environment, clean air, is very important to this government.

That's \$2 billion less that we had to put toward the debt, because the only money that comes in for the debt comes from Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One. They spent a considerable amount of money on the environment. That was less money toward the debt, and therefore we haven't been able to keep up with the debt repayments.

**The Speaker:** The Minister's time is up.

## MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT STAFF

### **Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

This question is for the Minister of the Environment. Madam Minister, Ontario's working families want to know that the water that they drink is safe. In fact, they want a guarantee from you and your government, they want every possible assurance that you are doing everything you should be doing to make sure that their water is safe. That includes all the necessary inspections and re-inspections.

Understanding that, can you tell me why, since Walkerton, over 67% of the staff hired to ensure that our water and our air are safe have only been hired on a temporary basis?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** We would concur with the Leader of the Opposition that it is extremely important that people in the province of Ontario have assurance that the water that they drink is safe. Certainly last year there were many, many steps taken by our government in order to ensure that the drinking water protection regulation was put in place, and additional staff have been hired in order to ensure that the appropriate measures can be taken to give the assurance to the public that drinking water is indeed very safe.

**Mr McGuinty:** Our working families don't want your blithe reassurances, Madam Minister. They want real, hard and concrete action.

What are they going to think when they learn today that 67% of those inspectors that you have hired have been hired on a temporary basis? There's a very real doubt here that you understand how important it is that you take positive action and hire the necessary people on a lasting basis. We went through the Job Marts since Walkerton and we have learned that, again, 67% of the inspectors that you've hired have only been hired on a temporary basis.

Is this a public relations exercise designed to tide you over until Walkerton blows over, or have you really drawn the necessary and painful lessons from Walkerton? Why have you not, at a minimum, hired those inspectors that you have hired on a permanent basis?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** As the Leader of the Opposition knows, the new resources that have been added at the Ministry of the Environment relate in particular to the new SWAT program. That SWAT team, of course, added 69 new staff and is costing \$10 million. Initially that was intended to be a temporary program and now, as we move forward, of course, that program will be continued. It will be expanded for all Ontarians in order to ensure that we have the safest drinking water possible.

## EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** I have question for the Minister of Education. During the last four months, when the Liberals, by their questions and

statements lately, seemed to think that they were on vacation, I was spending 16 to 18 hours a day meeting with constituents in my riding. During these meetings, parents and teachers expressed to me their views that today's students need to be extremely well educated and well trained to compete for jobs with other students, not only from this province but also from elsewhere across Canada and around the world. Parents have told me they like the higher standards we have set for the students, they like the more demanding curriculum, they like the teacher testing and they like the province-wide testing. But they have also said that more needs to be done. They want a role in their children's education to ensure they are getting the best possible education.

1530

I also spoke with teachers—and by the way, I also engaged in job shadowing of teachers—and they assured me that they like the new curriculum and they like the standardized testing because they now have an idea what needs to be done in their classrooms, what they need to achieve. Minister, what can I tell these teachers and parents about how we are going to ensure that their students are always getting the best possible education in order to lead productive lives?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** We can assure them that in the goals of our education quality reforms, our plan is to have more quality, more accountability, more investments in classrooms and higher standards. That's what we're working to do with our education partners. The reason that some of those changes to date have been working as well as they have is because of the excellent work by our teachers, by our staff, the co-operation of our parents across the province. We have put in place school councils so that parents have a clear role and clear responsibilities, on turnaround plans, for example, to make their schools better. The honourable member likes to say he invented turnaround plans and teams. He must have been reading the education improvement commission report that talks about that. I'm very glad he supports that. He'll support our stuff when we come forward with it.

The parents will have role in setting policies on safe schools, on the evaluation of teachers, on the facility surveys, on dress code. So we are clearly saying parents have a role, higher standards have a role, testing has a role, setting targets; all of those things are there to ensure that our students get the education they need—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up. Supplementary?

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I know that the parents in Kitchener Centre will happy that they're going to have a greater role in terms of choice, in being surveyed and in terms of dress codes, but these parents and the teachers have also asked me that standardized testing be extended to all grades.

Professors and administrators of colleges and universities have indicated to me that we must do this. I have spoken with Jim Downey, the former president of



the University of Waterloo. I have spoken with Bob Rosehart, the president of Wilfrid Laurier University; to David Johnson, the present president of the University of Waterloo; and to John Tibbits who is the president of Conestoga College. They all advised me that if we are going to have our students compete with the students around the world, these things are going to be necessary.

We also need to ensure, according to them, that the education system is accountable to the parents, students and those excellent teachers in the system, and I wonder what you are going to do to ensure that.

#### *Interjections.*

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** You know the Liberal Party over there is hooting and hollering, saying, "How about results?" And then when the honourable member here on my side recommends further tests to get results, they hoot and holler that suggestion down. So here we have the Liberal Party policy in full display again. They want results, but they don't want to take the steps to get results. It reminds me of Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz: you click your heels three times and everything's warm and fuzzy.

Well, we're not in Kansas any more—we're here in Ontario where we need higher standards, where we need tests for students to identify problems so we can fix them, where we need turnaround plans for each school, where we need targets so there's accountability, so parents know how well their kids are doing in school so they can make intelligent choices.

Yet again the Liberals say, "We're in favour of parental choice, but we're against anything that gives parents the information to make that choice." We're on the side of making the system better, and we're not going to stop until—

#### CHILDREN'S SECRETARIAT

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** My question is for the Deputy Premier. My leader, Dalton McGuinty, said in the First Steps document that Ontario needs a minister for children to prevent a fragmentation of services. In your 1998 business plan for the children's secretariat, it is indicated that although several ministries fund or provide services to children, an overall perspective is needed. Your former minister without portfolio was put in her job to develop a unified and coordinated approach to policy planning for children.

In a time when it is amply apparent that our families and children need support, direction and leadership, your government is missing in action. Explain to the people of Ontario why this government has all but collapsed the children's secretariat and why it has removed the minister with responsibility for children. Why has that happened?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I refer the question to the minister responsible for children.

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I find the member opposite's question rather odd. This government continues to have a minister responsible for children. We continue to have a children's secretariat working for children. What we've heard from just about all corners of the province is we've got to integrate services for children, that we have to tear down the silos within the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

We have an assistant deputy minister who is responsible for integrated services for children, who reports to both my cabinet colleague the Minister of Health and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. In my capacity as minister responsible for children, I continue to work with all my cabinet colleagues, whether it's the minister for recreation or the Minister of Education, to ensure that children's issues are constantly thought of, whether we're looking at seat belt laws or at issues affecting things like pediatric cancer.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** Your Premier established the children's ministry to demonstrate your government's commitment to children. The Early Years study, a document commissioned by Mike Harris, states that, "The creation in 1997 of the role of a minister responsible for children is viewed by many community groups and provincial children's organizations as a long overdue step. The government appointed a minister to give children's issues a higher profile within government."

Recommendation number 2 of the Early Years study says, "To ensure a strong voice around the cabinet table...we urge the Premier to give the minister responsible for children a strong mandate and resources." Your government has done the opposite. Children in this province deserve more than a part-time minister. The ruse is up. The people of Ontario know this government has no commitment to children in a time when children need an advocate more than ever before. Explain why your government is ignoring the recommendation of your own commission.

**Hon Mr Baird:** I don't think the member opposite does herself or her party any credit with that type of rhetoric. This government is tremendously committed to children's issues. This government has increased support for children's aid societies by more than 114%. This government is providing more funds to help disabled children than ever in the history of Ontario. The recommendation says very strongly that we need a strong minister responsible for children. That continues to exist and we continue to work very hard for that.

The member opposite is clearly only interested in engaging in name-calling and, in my judgment, that doesn't do her credit, it doesn't do her party credit and it doesn't do these issues credit.

We continue to work very hard on an Early Years agenda. We made a statement earlier, and she didn't even get up in the House. We need a children's critic to get up in the House. Her leader didn't even respond to the children's issues earlier today. Could you please put a

higher profile critic for children's issues so they can get up and respond when this government announces things for children?

### STUDENT LOANS

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. My question concerns the Ontario student loans program. I trust that you are very aware of the importance of this loan program and how concerned students can become prior to going to university when there is some question about getting that particular loan.

Recently, I found out that the financial institutions providing student loans will no longer be involved in the program after July 31 of this year. I want your assurance that students in my riding of Northumberland will not be disadvantaged by this change. What will you do to ensure that students in Ontario will continue to have access to student loans so they can pursue their dreams through post-secondary education?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** It's always a pleasure to answer a question from the member from Northumberland, who is constantly representing his students. He should assure his students that the loans we have made available to students in the past will, with new legislation that was introduced today, continue. Not only will they continue, but we will now harmonize with the federal loan system and reduce the red tape. It's very cumbersome and it will be more effective and efficient, not only for our students but our taxpayers. This is governments working together and this is what we want.

On top of that, I hope you will remind the students that this government has increased tuition by only 2% year over year for the next five years, as opposed to 10% by the Liberals year after year after year, and 10% by the NDP year after year after year. It's 2%, and I hope the member from Northumberland will take that message back to make sure our students only pay their fair share of their education in this province, which we have kept at some 35%. That's our promise. There will be a space for every qualified and willing student.

1540

**Mr Galt:** Minister, as you're aware, some students come from families that certainly can afford post-secondary education. However, others are not nearly that fortunate. Today, OSAP loans are given on the need of students. Students in my riding who are thinking of college or university want to know if they will be treated differently under the new harmonized loan arrangement. Will students applying for assistance after August 1 be treated differently under the terms of this new legislation?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** We have a commitment to our young people. The legislation we introduced today will not only provide the same level of assistance to our students, but it will make it more convenient for our

students to manage and repay their loans. It's extremely important that we work with one harmonized service provider. Students then, of course, will face less red tape. It will be less cumbersome when they're trying to manage both their Ontario and federal portions of their loans. We are totally committed to helping those students, especially those students who are in need. They are our first priority. We will continue to provide interest-free loans as long as the students are in school and beyond, and we will be improving that commitment to our students and making announcements in the near future.

The honourable member and every member in this House knows that we have worked with the federal government in this regard, that we hope that together we are making things better for our students. In fact, if we were to work together more often, we would have these kinds of enhanced programs that are efficient for our students and their families.

### CHILD POVERTY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** My question is for the Deputy Premier.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. Order. We can't have people yelling back and forth. That question has been asked. It's now the member for Sault Ste Marie's time.

**Mr Martin:** Minister, I attended a press conference this morning that was yet another scathing condemnation of your government's record where child poverty is concerned. Campaign 2000 released a report that states one in three children in Toronto is living in poverty. We're talking about Toronto here, the industrial heartland of this province. With economic growth like we've not seen before, with jobs being created like we've not seen before, one in three children is living in poverty. This is a growth in child poverty and a depth of child poverty that we've not seen in this province before. How can your government allow this kind of poverty to exist under your watch?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** To the minister responsible for children.

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** This government believes that one child living in poverty is one too many.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Baird:** That's very funny. This government believes that one child living in poverty is one child too many, and we're tremendously concerned. If spending a whole lot of money on our welfare system was the way to address child poverty, we wouldn't have had the instances of child poverty the honourable member spoke of in the early 1990s.

We're working to build a strong economy. The single very best thing we can do for a young child is to help



their parents get a job. That's why we've worked on an economic growth agenda, to see more parents be able to realize the dignity that comes with a job and the pride that comes with being independent. We will put forward a whole series of initiatives aimed at addressing these types of concerns.

**Mr Martin:** Minister, there's a plague stalking the children of this province, the plague of poverty, and you have the ability to do something about it. You have the responsibility as minister to do something about this horrid situation. One in three children in Toronto is living in poverty. We're not even talking about the north or rural Ontario. We're talking about Toronto.

Will you today do at least one thing to send a message to the families across this province who are living in poverty, trying to look after their children? Will you stop the clawback of the child tax benefit supplement today? You can do that and you can put close to \$100 per month into the pockets of parents to feed their children in this province, starting tomorrow. Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Baird:** I addressed that question yesterday, but when you look at the measures, look at the report, I'll say two things. One, they looked at low-income cut-offs whom Maryanne Webber, the director of the income statistics division—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Baird:** The member opposite asked me a question. Would he like an answer?

Maryanne Webber, the director of Statistics Canada, said—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. You did ask the question. If you then yell at him, it's very difficult. I couldn't hear him.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** That's why you get the big bucks.

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Hamilton East, don't be a smart aleck. When I'm up here saying it, you're not going to throw the comments up here or you'll be named. It's as simple as that. We haven't done it this session but we'll do it very quickly if you want.

Now, you ask a question, you yell across, and then you wonder why the minister gets frustrated. He listened patiently to your question and didn't yell across. I think it's only fair that he answer, if you want to hear it.

Minister, it's up to you.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Thank you very much. The report the member cited uses low-income cut-offs. Maryanne Webber, the director of the income statistics division at Statistics Canada says, "... some people and groups have been using the Statistics Canada low-income lines as a de facto definition of poverty." This is not something that Statistics Canada does.

The report also uses 1998 figures. Since 1998, we've seen hundreds of thousands of jobs created in the province of Ontario. Since 1995, in fact, we've seen more than a quarter of a million children escape the welfare system. We've seen a substantial reduction in the number of people requiring economic assistance. Job creation and economic growth are helping lift more and

more people out of poverty. The job is not done. This government will remain committed to ensuring that—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up.

## JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** My question is for the Attorney General. Minister, your predecessor, Attorney General Flaherty, supported two judge-bashing, so-called judicial accountability bills, one introduced by the member for Scarborough Centre, which passed second reading, and one introduced by the member for London West.

His predecessor, Attorney General Harnick, very quickly shot down, quashed, did not support a similar judicial accountability bill introduced by the member for Oshawa.

My question for you is, you now have a judicial accountability bill before you introduced yesterday, Bill 15. Will you stand up here and fulfill your statutory and constitutional duties, stick up for the separation of powers in the province of Ontario and tell us that you clearly will not support Mr Wood's bill?

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I trust that the member opposite isn't suggesting to this assembly that he does not believe that private members should have an opportunity to come forward and to bring issues that are debated in the public into this chamber?

Certainly, I don't believe that. I think it is open to any member of this assembly to introduce a private member's bill and I think that is a fundamental right that I will continue to defend.

But I do want to say this, and I have said it publicly: there should be absolutely no doubt that judicial independence is something I am prepared to fight for.

**Mr Bryant:** I appreciate the member's answer, but it was very clear when Attorney General Harnick—actually, his parliamentary assistant—said in this House that he was strongly opposed to a Judicial Accountability Act introduced by the member for Oshawa. You voted in favour of the equivalent of the Judicial Accountability Act bill in December. You then told the Globe and Mail that you were going to oppose these bills in April this year.

1550

The question is, are you going to be a squeegee-rattling, judge-bashing Attorney General like your predecessor, or are you going to follow in the footsteps of Roy McMurtry, Ian Scott and Charles Harnick and say very clearly that you are going to oppose this Judicial Accountability Act? Which is it going to be? Are you going to support the bill like your predecessor, or are you going to oppose it like Minister Harnick would have?

**Hon Mr Young:** Before I attempt to answer what might have been a question in some form, let me start by saying I don't for a millisecond accept his rendition of history as it relates to either of my predecessors. He clearly is interested in sound bites, not solutions.

Let me quote from another Liberal member, who put in writing very clearly her position on one of the issues he has brought to this assembly today, and that is a former leader of the Liberal Party, Ms McLeod. She said as follows, and I quote from page 49 of the Red Book: "A Liberal government will make sure that when a crime has been committed, the punishment fits the crime ... creating, in consultation with judges, a province-wide database with up-to-date information about sentencing decisions in Ontario, to help judges make sentencing decisions that are consistent, predictable and fair." That sounds a lot like the type of debate that my colleagues are encouraging in this assembly.

### LIVING LEGACY

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. I understand Ontario's Living Legacy has recently celebrated its second anniversary. On the eve of the second anniversary, I noticed a story in the *Toronto Star* entitled *Tories Deserve Credit on Parks*, saying that "if we stick to the facts as we know them ... rather than suspicions or innuendo, it is hard to argue with the progress the government has made on Lands for Life." It also notes that "the previous NDP government, supposedly environmentally friendly, did far less with the same file."

Minister, can you tell us the truth about Ontario's Living Legacy and some of what has been accomplished in its first two years?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):** As you know, Mr Speaker, the member for Peterborough is famous for quoting from the *Toronto Star* on a regular basis, and I thank him for introducing that in the Legislature today.

In fact, as the member probably knows, some five years ago my predecessor, Minister Hodgson, and Premier Harris announced the largest public consultation on public land use ever in the history of the province under *Lands for Life*. That resulted in Living Legacy: 378 new parks and protected areas, six million acres of protected land in the province, the largest announcement ever made. I am told by reliable sources that this is the equivalent of 11.9 million CFL football fields. I leave it to the Speaker's imagination how many NFL football fields that might be.

But I want to say that in addition to this, we have an accord that allows our environmental community and our forestry community to move forward with what is the best, most sustainable forestry in the world.

**Mr Stewart:** Actually, Minister, I use the *Star* in a very small room in my House—strictly for information, not as a joke.

Minister, putting an end to the generations-long war of the woods, bringing the environmental community and the forestry community into a partnership that is strong and lasting and protecting more land than at any other time in Ontario's history might be enough for most governments. But we didn't say that. We did more. As I recall, Ontario's Living Legacy has recently expanded

beyond what was already a huge achievement into something even greater. In fact, I saw that on Earth Day this past weekend you were involved in expanding Ontario's Living Legacy even further down in southern Ontario.

Minister, can you tell us about the expansion of Ontario's Living Legacy?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I didn't catch the start of the member for Peterborough's question, but I noticed from the member for Scarborough north that it must have been very graphic, from the look on his face.

I can tell you that we have in fact expanded this program. On March 23, 2000, Premier Harris expanded Living Legacy into the most comprehensive natural heritage program in the history of the province. We included greater protection for species at risk, more protection and enhancement for fish and wildlife and their habitats, more protection by acquiring more natural areas, support in the efforts to regulate our 378 new parks and protected areas and on and on.

With the natural areas protection program, I was able to announce that we have had 11 additional areas in southern Ontario this year alone, including a 39-hectare addition to the Terra Cotta Conservation Area, a 61-hectare addition to the Nottawasaga Bluffs Conservation Area in Simcoe county and a 40-hectare addition to the Bruce Trail in the town of Halton.

### FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I understand there was a recent transfer of the Family Responsibility Office from the Ministry of the Attorney General to your ministry. We are aware, of course, over the history of that, what we have encountered with the problems with that ministry handling the affairs of the Family Responsibility Office. My constituents asked me if you could reassure us that your ministry will now handle this matter better than the Attorney General's office was in the past.

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** We all believe that children and families who rely on receiving support payments are entitled to receive every cent possible. We've undertaken to expand the number of services and supports to allow the Family Responsibility Office to do a better job. Year after year we're doing better. Certainly over the last three or four years we've done a demonstrably better job than when I first arrived at this place. We continue to try to ensure that a family that requires that support, that is entitled to that support, gets every cent they're entitled to.

**Mr Curling:** My constituents don't agree with your history. They feel it was handled terribly by the Attorney General, and caused a great amount of confusion. Let me tell you why they're concerned. They felt, although the optics may look even better, that the Attorney General's



office was able to enforce some of these payments. Now that it's under your jurisdiction, they feel it will be worse. Now that it's not under the Attorney General's office, can you make sure that the enforceability is better than it was? They thought the Attorney General's office was more enforceable under these conditions.

**Hon Mr Baird:** In the first part of his question he says, "You were doing a terrible job in the past. Will you make things better?" In his supplementary question he's saying, "Things were really great with the Attorney General. Can you promise that you'll do just as good a job?" I promise that we'll continue to work very hard to ensure that every family gets every dollar they're entitled to. We have made a number of changes in recent years with the Family Responsibility Office to try to do better, things like drivers' licence suspensions, things like a whole range of supports in terms of going back and collecting money that never was collected in the past. We are collecting more money this year than we have ever collected in the past. Year after year we're doing a better job, and we continue to be focused on doing better. We continue to be focused on—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** It being 4 pm, I am now required to called orders of the day, pursuant to standing order 30(b).

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** I have a statement of business of the House for next week.

On Wednesday afternoon there will be an NDP opposition day.

On Thursday morning during private members' business we will discuss ballot items number 3 and number 4.

The remainder of the week's business is still to be determined, subject to the debate on Bill 13.

## CONSIDERATION OF BILL 13

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The order is for next week.

I wish to advise the House on the arrangements for tomorrow's special sitting of the House which was agreed on earlier today. So all members aren't tardy, they may want to hear this. The motion adopted by the House says "that the House come back at 1:30 tomorrow to finish second and third readings of Bill 13." Therefore, at 1:30 tomorrow the House will immediately proceed to orders of the day and the order for second reading of Bill 13 will be called. Debate on second reading will proceed to its conclusion and the question on the motion for second reading will then be put. If the motion passes, the bill will be ordered for third reading and that order will then immediately be called. The debate on third reading will proceed to its conclusion and the question on the motion for third reading will then be put. The House will then stand adjourned to the next sessional day.

I interpret the special orders adopted earlier to mean that no deferrals of the vote on second or third reading

may be permitted and that the House may continue to meet past 6 pm as required. Hopefully that clarifies everything for everyone involved under the special circumstances.

1600

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

#### DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 25, 2001, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It is indeed an honour and a privilege to rise this afternoon and reply to the speech from the throne on behalf of the government caucus and on behalf of the constituents of Simcoe North. I'd also like to take a moment to thank Her Honour for delivering the throne speech last week. She does it in such an eloquent way and she's a fine representative of the Queen here in Ontario.

The speech from the throne is one of the more important documents that we as members of the Legislature address in this House. It highlights our government's plans for this session of the Legislature and sets out a plan to predict the real economic gains that the hard-working men and women of this province have earned for Ontario over the past six years. It also prepares the province for a future that offers new economic challenges, hope and a future filled with tremendous opportunities.

All of the steps of our 21 steps to the 21st century focus on strengthening our economy, since a good economy and a good quality of life go hand in hand. Only by strengthening our economy can we continue to invest in priorities like health care and education, and offer Ontario's families the promise of a better life. As we have said many times, we need the revenues flowing in from a strong economy to pay for all the services the people of this province expect and deserve.

The throne speech included several initiatives to keep Ontario competitive. We are committed to more tax cuts to create more jobs. Of course, we know that's been very successful and we will continue down that road. And we will apply a new business impact test to all proposed regulations that might impair our ability to attract investment and jobs.

A new task force will measure and monitor Ontario's productivity, competitiveness and economic progress and compare Ontario to other provinces and some of the American states. This task force will be led by Roger Martin, dean of the Joseph L. Rotman School of Management, and will report to the public on a regular basis.

For me, one of the highlights of the throne speech was when Her Honour talked about the need for skills development, or step 14 in our plan to create a stronger

economy. I know I could not duplicate Her Honour's eloquent words, but I would like to reread the section, step 14:

"Step 14 is to address skill shortages—including among the trades—and ensure that Ontario boasts the skilled workforce necessary to attract investment and jobs.

"The government intends to establish an innovative new post-secondary institution that would link education and skills training with the needs of the marketplace." Details of that initiative will be announced in the budget, and I believe that's on May 9th.

As most of you in the House know, before being elected as the MPP for Simcoe North, I was managing our family construction business, where I had the chance over 25 years to meet a wide range of highly skilled tradespeople. These people work hard and are rewarded, and they're rewarded in a fine way, particularly in our part of the province, with the wonderful geography we live in, with a good, livable wage, and they enjoy a profession that most of them truly love.

As a member of the Premier's Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal, I had a chance to tour the province and listen to the people on a number of occasions. I remember in Orillia when Tony Telford, the president of Orser Electric Ltd, addressed the committee about the need for more plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers, electricians and other important tradespeople who help build Ontario. The people of this province have said that there could be a shortage of skilled labour. I am pleased that we are prioritizing this as a very important issue.

I know the people in the Ministry of Education are not surprised about how passionately I talk about skills training. Before, and since I was appointed as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, it is a topic that I continue to talk about, and for good reason. The number of construction projects and plans that are in place right now for the future will require a number of skilled tradespeople, and as we grow our economy we will continue to require a strong construction workforce.

If we look at some of the provincial initiatives, things such as the redevelopment of our hospital projects—over \$1 billion in announcements on those—and the 20,000 long-term-care facilities and 13,000 redevelopment beds of long-term-care facilities and all of the expansions of the colleges and universities to meet the double cohort for the year 2003, these will require more and more skilled tradespeople. We have to continue to look at skilled tradespeople as well as the other important positions that are required across the province like doctors, lawyers and academic positions.

Throughout this week, our government has been releasing more information about initiatives that support our throne speech. On Monday, the Ministers of Labour, Consumer and Business Services, Management Board, Economic Development and Energy, Science and Technology talked about the measures that we are taking to remove barriers to jobs, investment and growth.

On Tuesday, the associate minister and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care talked about the need for national leadership in health care reform. I cannot mention health care without mentioning the quality of health services in my riding of Simcoe North. Actually, I would like to thank the Minister of Health for providing \$1.1 million to support quality health care services at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in Orillia as well as the announcement today of another \$143,000 that will help with heating cost improvements at that hospital. Soldiers' is continuing its hospital expansion, thanks to the financial support of this government. There was a major hospital fundraising campaign kicked off in Orillia just recently, led by the Honourable Doug Lewis, the former federal member of Parliament from 1979 to 1993, and that fundraising drive of course is to provide local funds to the \$56-million redevelopment project that our government is committed to.

As well, the North Simcoe Hospital Alliance in Penetanguishene is proceeding with plans to construct the permanent dialysis unit, and I was so pleased when the Honourable Elizabeth Witmer, the former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, made that announcement last fall.

I'd also like to thank the Premier for coming to Orillia in March and touring the new 112-bed Stephen Leacock long-term-care centre that will be opening its doors later this month. The Premier had a chance to tour the facility while it was under construction and met with local construction workers, local leaders and the Jarrolett family, who are building this facility.

Last year, the previous Minister of Health, Elizabeth Witmer, as I mentioned earlier, came to Midland and opened the 100-bed Hillcrest Village Care Centre. This new 100-bed centre features four resident home areas, each with dining rooms, lounge and recreation areas, as well as access to the outdoors through a secured patio or balcony. There are also large common spaces that include a chapel, a large auditorium and meeting rooms. As well, state-of-the-art call systems have been installed for the residents' safety and well-being.

**1610**

For people who haven't had the opportunity to tour some of the new long-term-care facilities, I would encourage members from all sides of the House to participate in a tour, because they are extremely beautiful facilities for our senior citizens.

Yesterday, the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Transportation talked about our Smart Growth initiative, which is our plan to continue to encourage more economic growth, create strong opportunities and protect the environment. This will be done with broad consultations throughout our province.

Last month, I had the opportunity to hold a non-partisan symposium on the Oro moraine, which is an environmentally sensitive area in my riding. It's an area just north of Barrie, between Barrie and Orillia, in the Highway 11 area. I was pleased to see over 250 people attend the symposium. The guest speakers talked about



balancing growth and preserving our resources, the challenges and opportunities we face as a growing province.

At this time, I'd like to thank Kerry Green, who is the project coordinator for the Oro Moraine Habitat Project. It's a two-year initiative undertaken by the Couchiching Conservancy. I was very pleased to see that the Trillium Foundation helped to fund this Oro Moraine Habitat Project. Ms Vicki Barron, the manager of the Credit River Conservation Authority, works for the board of directors of 12 watershed politicians to develop and implement watershed management policies and programs for the Credit River, and she was a speaker as well. Mr Hugh Simpson is a rural groundwater specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and Brian Beatty is a water resources engineer who specializes in groundwater. I'd like to thank them for participating in this event.

I'd also like to thank all those people who came out to listen to these experts in the field. It was a good feeling to be in a room with so many people who cared about the environment and were looking at everything from a constructive-criticism type of position.

I think we have to do that in all areas of the province. I know there's a tremendous demand. I believe there will be a demand on the growth in the area north of Barrie, between Barrie and Muskoka. I know we've got plans in the Midland area to open a new Wal-Mart store, and usually where Wal-Mart goes, there are plans for a lot of growth in that area.

Just a week ago, I was happy to participate in the opening of the new Home Depot store in the city of Orillia. Of course, that's taking a lot of work as well. I want to thank Minister Clark for his assistance because we have to four-lane a piece of Highway 12 near the Wal-Mart centre because of the increased traffic that's a result of the development in that area. Mr Clark's ministry and his staff have been very helpful in providing that help.

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** Wasn't that Highway 12 down there?

**Mr Dunlop:** No. Highway 12 has always been Highway 12.

Since being named as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and government House leader, I've had a chance to learn more about our education system—and it is a very complex system that we have—and more about the way this House operates. I would like to thank the Premier and the Minister of Education for the faith they have placed in my abilities in naming me to this position. I have a great deal of respect for the position and I hope to do a good job in it.

Quality education and skills for the 21st century: today, the Minister of Education talked about three of the next steps in our action plan to move Ontario into the 21st century. We will increase flexibility and choice in education by supporting creative new school models and making sure home-schooled children have access to standard tests and other learning tools.

We know there is still room for improvement in our education system. That's why we will continue to set high education standards and increase performance-based accountability in our schools. Parents will have more say through annual parent satisfaction surveys to be launched this November. We'll expand standardized testing to all grades and make sure schools promote only those students who achieve at an acceptable level. School boards will have to set clear targets to improve student achievement in schools that aren't performing and make sure that students who are falling behind get the help they need to catch up.

Ontario needs the best and brightest to build a smart, strong, growing province.

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities talked about a new charter that will make Ontario's colleges more responsive and entrepreneurial so they can offer more opportunities to our students. We'll invest in building a skilled workforce in high-growth sectors and help foreign-trained professionals qualify for employment and meet skills shortages.

Since the government came to power, I'm very proud of the accomplishments of our government, particularly when we see that we have eliminated the huge deficit that we inherited, the number of jobs that we've created, and the respect that the private sector has for the opportunities to invest in our province. I believe these are all very important achievements by this government and I think the province of Ontario has a brilliant future.

We have set an ambitious but achievable goal in the throne speech: that within 10 years Ontario will enjoy the best-performing economy and the highest quality of life in North America. This is the plan that will get us there.

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words to you today. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Caplan:** The member touched on a lot of subjects and one of them was in regard to skills training. I do have a question for the member from Simcoe North. Does he remember Bill 55? It was an amendment to the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act where, at a time when we were facing a very severe skills shortage in the province of Ontario, it was the Harris government which tried to introduce what they called "restricted skills sets." They tried to fragment the trades. They tried to downgrade the trades. They tried, frankly, to make it less attractive to get into the trades. Does the member from Simcoe North recognize what the Harris government's track record is when it comes to skills training in this province?

I have a second question as well. The member talked about the environment. The environment is a very, very important quality of life but it's also an important health issue here in Ontario. My question to the member is: it was revealed today in question period, in a question from my leader, Dalton McGuinty, to the Minister of the Environment, that of the hiring that has been done at the ministry for water testing and inspection, 67%—two-

thirds of the people hired—have only been hired on a temporary basis. So my question to the member is: if the environment is important, why has the Harris government decided to hire inspectors only on a temporary basis? Why is there no long-term commitment? Why have they cut 40% out of the Ministry of the Environment and decided to rehire people—who they fired—on a temporary basis only? I hope the member will answer those questions in the spirit in which they were put.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I listened intently to the comments from the member across the way talking about job growth in the province of Ontario. I think any government, I don't care whose government would be in power during the time of the American rebound—as we saw through the mid-1990s, all the way till now—could have taken credit for some of the job growth. But what really worries me, and I think what worries a lot of people, is the almost deindustrialization of some parts of the province. We're starting to see it certainly in northern Ontario and we're seeing it in other parts of the province, where the number of industrial jobs that used to provide really good employment at good wages for people across this province is really diminishing. What we're seeing is an increase in the number of jobs at places like Wal-Mart, most of those places that pay anywhere from minimum wage up to 10 or 12 bucks an hour. I think for an economy like Ontario's, those jobs are good as second jobs but not really as the main jobs to provide for families.

So I ask the member, the parliamentary assistant across the way, what is his position vis-à-vis Ontario Hydro? We're seeing now that the government of Ontario has moved to privatize Hydro and deregulate, and we now know that this is now going to result in hydro increases to industrial users as well as residential users across the province. So the taxpayer, whom you've given the tax cut to, is going to have their hydro bill increase because of changes your government has made. That's the first issue.

But the biggest issue is what is going to happen to hydro rates to companies like Falconbridge, Tembec, Algoma Steel and others out there who rely on Ontario Hydro—I should say other than Algoma Steel—in order to operate their plants. In a place like Falconbridge, a 20% increase is going to mean a serious problem on the books when it comes to their ability to operate next year. So I say to the parliamentary assistant, why don't you guys stop your stupid attack on Ontario Hydro and try to provide an infrastructure that's good for Ontario?

1620

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** I'd like to make some comments about the member for Simcoe North's comments about the throne speech. There isn't any doubt in my mind that the foundations and the points laid out in that throne speech clearly indicate where we want to move Ontario from where it is today. All you have to recall is the past. Go back to 1991-92.

It's interesting to hear the members opposite. I remember in our first term the mantra was, "Where are

the jobs?" We've proven to some extent—we did not create, but we created the environment for the private sector to bring about 825,000 jobs in this province. That's what I call economic growth. I know they still don't believe the idea. We have to keep kicking the tires about it, though. Economic growth is predicated on lower taxes, whether they be personal, corporate or a user-fee type, when you buy gasoline or anything in the area of consumer goods. When you have lower taxes, you actually have increased revenues. Where did we get the increased revenues? From the economic growth over the last number of years.

I know the critics across the way say it's exports to the United States only, but guess what? The jurisdictions in the Great Lakes have shown consistently that they have competitive tax rates. When you have higher ones, you have people flee, you have companies flee. I was just talking with one of the major manufacturers in my area, who has indicated that if we can't keep our taxes competitive, they have other choices. They're not bound like an anchored tree to stay in one place. They'd like to stay here, but they are mentioning time and again that we must continue down the road to have a competitive tax environment. Otherwise we will not have the economic growth we need for our vital services.

**The Speaker:** Further questions or comments? Seeing none, response?

**Mr Dunlop:** It's a pleasure to get up to respond to some of the comments. First of all, to Mr Caplan—I'm sorry about the riding. I'll never get the riding straight, I'm sorry. Maybe we'll change the names in another term or something and get some more clarity to them.

Your comments about downgrading the trades and about our government: I spent the last 25 years in trades and—this is an honest opinion coming from my heart—all the way through my high school career I felt there was almost a stigma attached to people who entered the trades, that it was lower than being an academic. Of course, you know that some of the building contractors and trades contractors we have throughout our province are some of the most successful companies and business people we have today. They employ a lot of people in our province.

My own son has been through the apprenticeship program. One of the things I noticed: he was 22 years old when he got his papers and I think he was, by 15 years, the youngest person in his class. He told me all the other tradespeople were 36, 38 or in their 40s, and they were in their apprenticeship plans. I don't blame that on any particular government. I attach that to the fact that there has been a stigma attached to the trades, and I'd like to see that removed. I will be taking a strong approach to that in the future, because I think there are so many people we will need in a growing province and a growing economy that we will have to have the skilled workforce. I will be doing whatever I can as a parliamentary assistant or as a member of this government to try to promote the development of skilled trades in our province.



**The Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Don Valley East.

**Mr Caplan:** The Speaker can get it right, I say to the member from Simcoe North. I will be sharing my time with the member from Hamilton East.

It is a pleasure, on behalf of the people of Don Valley East, to address this Legislature on Her Honour's comments from the throne. In my comments I want to contrast Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party and our vision and our plan for the future with what we heard from the government via Her Honour. I also want to talk about what wasn't contained in the throne speech, because a critical element was missing.

The first thing I would like to tell, not only this Legislature, but the people who are watching and listening and the people of Ontario, is that there is a marked difference between the vision Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party has and that which Mike Harris and the Conservative Party have, and it's simply this: over here we are fighting for working families in Ontario; the Harris government looks after its wealthy friends. They are the party of a very narrow special interest, an elite. That is a marked difference in philosophy. It is a marked difference in the way we approach things.

I believe, and this has been shown time and again over the past several years, quite frankly, that Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party have a positive plan for Ontario's future, a positive plan especially for our working families. I think the government is stuck in the past. If you read this throne speech, you will find recycled elements from the throne speech that was read here, lo, six years ago in 1995. There are no bold, new ideas for the future to embrace a new century, to embrace a new millennium.

We want to ensure there is prosperity over the long term for all of us. The government's focus is very narrow. It is only for their friends. Our vision, our goals, our drive is for our future and for our families. I really see the government as being arrogant. It doesn't represent the views and values and principles of Ontario's working families.

I talked a little bit earlier about what our plans were, and we've unveiled many of them. In fact, when you look at the throne speech, some of the ideas from our education plan, for example, have been cherry-picked by this government. I would say that's OK, but you cannot selectively take parts of the plan. It is an integrated plan, and there will be more to come. We propose a real cap on class sizes from junior kindergarten to grade 3, not this average class size across the board. When you get the early years right—and their own consultants, their own studies, their own experts, their own panels have told them this—that's the best investment you can make. Education simply is the best investment.

Oftentimes it comes down to a question of priorities. We're saying, take one tenth of what you promised in tax cuts, invest that in our children and you will have the best return this province has ever seen.

We talked about our plan for lighthouse schools and turnaround teams, and of course the idea the government has chosen to move on is public school choice, although I must admit I don't believe they should. Since they don't share the same values we do, it will not be implemented in the same way a McGuinty government would.

We've had a lot more to say about education and unveiled our plans. We think we need peace in our schools. After six long years of chaos and turmoil, enough is enough. Today we had some comings and goings in the Legislature, and yesterday we had back-to-work legislation after the 60th labour disruption in our schools. Isn't it time we had some stability? Isn't it time we had some peace? Isn't it time that the kids spent more time in their classrooms than they do being out because of these constant disruptions? It's an indictment of the policies of this government, of the direction they've taken and their methodology in implementing it, that the kids have not been in school, that we can't get past a rigid, inflexible funding formula and micromanagement here at Queen's Park.

In fact, if you read Bill 160 or Bill 74, it is the minister who will make regulations, the minister will decide, and if you do not comply with the dictates of the Minister of Education, you can be fined, you can be removed from your position, you could be dismissed. Heck, I think the minister might even try to jail somebody.

1630

I was really amused when Her Honour read the throne speech where it said, "Queen's Park can lead without centralized micromanagement and control." What chutzpah. That's all this government has been about. "For example," and I continue, "4,746 schools and," almost 75,000, "classrooms cannot be run from the Ministry of Education." That's exactly what you've done. Talk about Orwellian doublespeak. I find it very hard to believe.

I want to continue. Unfortunately my time is very limited today. Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party have a plan to address the physician shortage crisis we have in Ontario. The government has decided to cherry-pick a few of those ideas, but they don't have the right mix, the right formula.

We have a six-point plan for safe drinking water. I want to share one of the elements with the members present here today: an immediate release of the drinking water surveillance program, the reports from 1998 and 1999. That's three years and two years ago respectively. You see, the ministry monitors the results but they don't publish the results. I found that very interesting because another cute little passage in the throne speech said, "Government is the servant of the people, not master. Citizens are more than 'customers' or 'clients'; the entire public sector belongs to them. Citizens are entitled," and here is the operative word, "to transparency in the operation of public institutions, including openness about how they spend and reporting of their performance and results."

If that's true, why does the Ministry of the Environment not release its results from 1998 and 1999 on drinking water quality in Ontario? Good question.

Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party have a plan for our emergency rooms and for health care. Again, the government has decided to try to cherry-pick a few of our ideas. I can tell you that a tired, arrogant, drifting, aimless government is just not going to be able to do it. We have the vision; we have a positive future.

In this so-called 21-step plan—when you have 21 priorities, you have no priorities. You want to try to do all things. That's ridiculous. But there was one glaring omission and I want to talk to the members here a little bit about it today. I'll talk to it by way of a submission that was made to the committee on finance and economic affairs a couple of months ago. It was from a group called the Toronto Board of Trade, a group of business leaders and advocates here in the city. This is what they said.

"Another infrastructure aspect that is directly correlated to the liveability of cities is access to affordable housing. The board recognizes the measures taken to date by the province. However, they are targeted largely at emergency shelters or hostel allowances with little action on increasing the stock of affordable housing. Lack of affordable housing in our urban area is a significant contributor to the rising level of homelessness—it must be a pivotal part of any provincial urban strategy." That's the Toronto Board of Trade.

There's another report I want to bring to the attention of the members here and that's the city of Toronto's Report Card on Homelessness 2001, some very interesting information. In any month the average number of new applications for social housing, for the waiting list, is 1,400 applications. I did a little bit of quick math. That translates into two households, two hard-working Ontario families every hour applying for social housing. In fact, eviction applications in Ontario have grown. On average about 2,300 eviction applications are applied for in one month alone. That's three families per hour potentially losing their housing as a result of the actions of the Harris government.

This government has shown no leadership. They've shown no plan in their throne speech. There's not even a drop of ink, not even a breath of air devoted to tackling Ontario's housing crisis. This is a serious issue, and we are all going to pay for it if the province of Ontario does not show any kind of leadership, because that is what's required.

I can tell you that Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party do have a plan for Ontario's hard-working families, we do have a vision and we do have a bright future. I look forward to seeing that realized. I'll now turn the floor over to my colleague.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I'm pleased to follow my colleague from Don Valley East, who I think very clearly outlined the differences between this government, the Mike Harris government, and the Dalton McGuinty Liberals in Ontario. Clearly it's a difference we're going to continue to outline to Ontarians every single day until Mike Harris has the courage to go to the polls and call upon Ontarians to once again judge this

government and its record. It's a difference we're proud of; it's a difference we are very confident with in going to the people of Ontario with and asking them to choose the vision and the plan they want for the future of this province.

When you look at the throne speech, it really was in many ways an admission of a government that has failed. It's a tired government. It clearly is the throne speech of a government that has lost its way, of a government that has lost the vision, that has lost the drive and the will to govern Ontario.

We saw a throne speech that had no vision, that did not tell Ontarians where they want to take them in the next year, two years, five years, 10 years.

We saw a throne speech that talked about reforming health care. It sounds like the same broken record. Six years ago, when this government came to power, they were going to reform health care. Six years later in the throne speech they still talk about reforming health care. They've had six years to fix the problem. They can't blame the NDP or the Liberal government before that or go back to Mitch Hepburn, as they did, in the 1940s to put blame on someone else. The health care crisis in Ontario belongs at the desk of Mike Harris, and six years later they come in and tell us they're going to fix it, again.

What is their plan for education? They're going to reform education, again. Six years ago this government came to power and they were going to reform education, because those bad NDPers or the Liberals before them had messed it all up. What do we hear in the throne speech six years later? They're going to reform education, again. Talk about six long years in this province of a government that clearly has no direction.

As my colleague from Don Valley East stated very well, this is not a government for hard-working families and hard-working Ontarians; this is a government for its wealthy friends, a government that only looks after those who agree with them, a government that only looks after the rich and the powerful in Ontario.

When you look at the throne speech, it is not only what is in there that is disturbing, but what is missing. If we look for a moment at what was in there, it talked about all possible solutions being on the table for the federal commission on health care. Talk about a back-door code word for saying that two-tier health care is on the table. That's not surprising. These are the friends of the party led by Stockwell Day, who campaigned on two-tier health care. These are the folks who supported, backed and worked for Stockwell Day through the federal election, so we're not surprised that today they're here talking about two-tier health care again.

The average, hard-working Ontarian can't afford two-tier health care, but the friends of the government can afford two-tier health care, because money is no object for those folks. They can afford to go to private clinics or private hospitals or across to the States. Hard-working families don't have that luxury. This government would



be more than content to take us down that road of two-tier health care.

Let me tell you, Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals are going to fight with every ounce of energy we have and everything we can give to ensure that there is never, ever two-tier health care and two tiers of Ontarians when it comes to being sick. If you're sick and you go to a hospital for care, the doctor should be asking you what is wrong with you, not how much money you have in your bank account or how much money your credit card can hold. That is not the Ontarian way; that is the American way. But this government is content to take us there.

We have looked at the health care crisis in Ontario. My colleague has talked about dealing with the emergency room crisis here and the plans we have put forward for this government, and they've ignored it.

1640

We talked about dealing with the shortage of doctors and this government has ignored it. There are answers or ideas out there, but this government is not interested in those ideas because those ideas do not include two-tier health care.

We believe that all Ontarians should be treated fairly and equally when it comes to their health and not one standard for the rich and one for average, hard-working Ontarians. We, as the next government, are going to make sure that happens.

Look at what the throne speech lacked when it came to water. Again, after the Walkerton tragedy you would have thought that this government, after this tragedy—if you think about it, in the year 2000 seven Ontarians died simply because they picked up a glass and drank water.

What has this government done ever since? They've hired part-time inspectors. They've taken staff out of Ministry of the Environment positions, which were already diminished, and moved them to a SWAT team. What have they done to enforce drinking water quality standards in Ontario? Absolutely nothing. They have not released their reports on past water quality standards in Ontario, as my colleague has said.

As we see the Walkerton inquiry unfold day by day, we see clearly that the government is going to have to be held accountable for the tragedy in Walkerton, because their cuts and their decisions contributed to seven people dying unnecessarily in this province. What does the throne speech say about that? Absolutely nothing.

Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, shortly after the Walkerton tragedy, unveiled a plan that would deal with many of the problems that came out as a result of Walkerton: the safe drinking water plan in June 2000. It talked about expansion of the surveillance program. It talked about inspections every six months across this province of every single facility. It talked about hiring 100 additional inspectors. But this government chose to ignore that. This government is still willing to play Russian roulette with the lives of Ontarians when it comes to quality in safe drinking water. Ontarians deserve better, and under the Liberal government of

Dalton McGuinty they will get better. It is a disgrace how this government has not learned from its mistakes and the tragedy of Walkerton to ensure it could never, ever happen again.

What did the throne speech continue to talk about? At a time when our hospitals are hurting, when our schools are in chaos, when we lack computers, textbooks, equipment and supplies, and teachers have large classrooms, you would think this government would understand that the priority for Ontarians is not tax cuts to the wealthiest, but accessibility to quality education for all Ontarians. But that is not the priority of this government. They're more concerned about continuing to give 50% of the tax cut to 20% of the people in this province, the 20% who are the wealthiest.

We outlined a plan that would only take 10 cents out of every dollar of the next run of tax cuts, that would ensure that we have classrooms from junior kindergarten to grade 3, not averaged out, but capped at 20, that there would not be any classroom in that group above 20. That is the case today.

That would be 10 cents out of every dollar of the tax cut. This government does not believe that is a worthwhile investment in our future and in our kids. We, the Ontario Liberals and Dalton McGuinty, believe that 10 cents out of every dollar from the future tax cut is a better investment in those kids who are sitting in front of you, Mr Speaker, than it is to go into the pockets of rich Ontarians.

There is a difference in priorities between the Liberals and Dalton McGuinty and the tired Tories of Mike Harris. Our priorities are working families; our priorities are quality health care; our priorities are quality education; our priorities are to ensure that no Ontarian should fear turning on the tap and drinking a glass of water. A clean environment: that is the priority of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals.

Accountability: we believe that ministers and Premiers have a responsibility to be in the House, answer the questions and be accountable to the people of Ontario, not carrying out dog-and-pony shows every day across this province, and we are going to ensure as a government that we are accountable to the people of Ontario.

I ask Ontarians to clearly look at the difference between what the Conservative government of Mike Harris is offering and have offered in the throne speech, and the proposals put by the opposition, by Dalton McGuinty and by the Liberals, because we're going to have one heck of an interesting debate in the next two years in this province and people are going to see the difference and they're going to see that it's time to get rid of this tired Tory government that has lost touch, has lost reality and no longer represents the views of the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I happen to agree with 90% or so of what the members from Don Valley East and Hamilton East have said, but I do have

some disagreement on some of the things they have talked about. The member from Don Valley, David, says that the Tories are only focused on a narrow band of special interests, meaning the very wealthy.

**The Acting Speaker:** I can't see you. There are two bodies in front of me.

**Mr Marchese:** While I understand that, I want to say, David, that when Liberals have a fundraiser and it's \$600 a pop and the Tories have a fundraiser at \$700 a pop, it's not the working guy who's coming to those events. It's that narrow band of people that you are accusing only the Tories of having. My concern is that while Chrétien has a \$1,000 fundraiser, it's not the little guy who's going to go to that fundraiser; it's going to be the big guy. It's that narrow band of special interests that supports both your party and them. I know you need to advance those arguments and I appreciate you need to, because you need to defend against the arguments I'm making.

Secondly, Dominic says tax cuts are really, really bad and most of the tax cuts go to the very wealthy. I happen to agree with him, but in the last election the Liberals said, "Tax cuts are bad, but if we get elected we won't touch them." You see the inconsistency of those arguments. So while I agree with you, I'm arguing that you need to be consistent and I'm arguing that you also need to reflect on the special interest groups, because you people feed from the same people.

**Mr Dunlop:** I'd like to respond to some of the comments: first of all, the two-tier health care system. I don't know what throne speech the member from Hamilton was reading, but I see nothing about two-tier health care in here. You can fearmonger all you want on two-tier health care, but the fact of the matter is spending in the province of Ontario is \$22.7 billion this year on health care, the highest in history. Finally, after Premier Harris embarrassed the federal government into returning some of the funding, which is supposed to be 50-50 under the original Canada health and social transfer, we're getting it up to something like 14 cents on the dollar, and we're still putting in 86 cents.

Tax cuts: I think the member from Trinity is right on. I don't know where you really stand on any kind of a plan over there. The feds were saying that tax cuts were wrong too, but then they came back when they saw the success of tax cuts in Alberta and Quebec and Ontario. They realized it works and they started using tax cuts in the last federal election. As the member from Trinity also said, it's embarrassing to hear you talk about your own tax cuts. Are you going to restore the tax cuts that we made? You say you're not, on one hand; on the other hand, you probably will.

I don't know what your plan is on education. Is it to give the power back to the school boards so we can have a 140% increase over the next 10 years in education costs? Is that what you plan, which happened in the previous 10 years? I'm sorry, we on this side of the House are trying to figure out your plan, because we think you're going nowhere with it and all it is is a tax-and-spend plan.

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** On the contrary, I say to the member opposite. You on that side of the House are on the defensive playing political games while we on this side of the House are trying to provide solutions. You talk about consistency, you talk about, "What are you going to do? You said this. What about that?" We're saying we are supporting universal health care and close the door on two-tier. You say that you refuse to close the door on two-tier health care. That's what the Premier said. That's what the member for Thornhill said. We were having a discussion on a media show last week. I said, "We're against two-tier health care." Is that clear?  
1650

**Mr Caplan:** That's clear.

**Mr Bryant:** That's clear to me. The question was asked of the member for Thornhill—same question to the Premier that same day—"Are you against it?" "Well, we want to do everything through one-tier health care, but," he said, "we've got to leave our options open." Why would you leave your options open? Is it because you want to introduce it down the line? Is it because you want to be able to say to those who support two-tier health care, wink, wink, "We're on your side"? Which is it going to be?

On this side, the Ontario Liberals could not be more clear. We're in favour of a universal, one-tier health care system, and on your side, you're not. If you want to play political rhetorical games, I'll tell you, after six years I find it hard to believe that the people of Ontario are going to have any appetite for that. As Dalton McGuinty says, "That dog won't hunt."

In the meantime, we're putting forward positive proposals in health care, in education, in every area where working families need our support. If you want to play games, fine. On this side of the House, we're going to put forward positive alternatives for the working families of Ontario.

**Mr Bisson:** Again, I've got to make the point: the government is trying to paint a picture that all of a sudden the economy is rosy and everything is going real well and nobody should worry, but there's a real problem underlying inside the economy that we need to recognize. Quite aside from what's happening in the markets—I was reading the other day in one of the papers that there were 800,000 less people last year in the United States who were millionaires. It means a lot of people lost a lot of money in the market. But aside from that, one of the things that underpins the economy of the province of Ontario is our ability to provide cheap, affordable hydro to the industries across this province. That's one of the things that makes us competitive. This government has an idea—I would say an ideological idea—that it wants to privatize and deregulate that system, supposedly to the benefit of the private sector.

Well, we look in California, we look in Alberta and we find it has been completely the opposite. Everywhere in North America where we have privatized or deregulated hydro we have found that we've had increasing hydro prices. In California and Alberta, certainly that has



been the case, and we now know, as a result of the first piece of the dismantling of Ontario Hydro to what it is now, we're looking at a 20% increase in hydro in this upcoming year.

The government across the way is proud to stand and say, "Oh, we're giving people tax cuts. That's going to get people working." Let me tell you what a 20% increase in hydro means to companies in my area. It means some of them are not going to be able to do the kinds of things they need to do to be able to operate. It means they're going to have to lay people off. It means in some cases they may have to close their doors. I say to the government across the way, wake up and smell the coffee. Your idea is a bad one. It's going to undo one of the basic tenets of our economy that makes it competitive. So I say to the government, get off this ideological kick and recognize that you have a responsibility to continue what has been a good tradition in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Hamilton East has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Agostino:** I'd like to thank the members for Trinity-Spadina, Simcoe North, St Paul's and Timmins-James Bay for their contribution to the debate.

I'll just respond to a couple of points. My colleague from Trinity-Spadina talked about tax cuts and our position for rolling back past tax cuts, and that points out a clear difference between the official opposition, Liberal Dalton McGuinty, and Howard Hampton of the NDP. We understand that you're still stuck in that time warp where you believe that raising taxes is acceptable. Let me make it clear: the Liberal Party stands clearly on the side of working families. We are not in favour of raising taxes, period; we'll leave that to the NDP.

My colleague from Simcoe North talked about two-tier health care and where that would come from. I'll ask the member to read his own throne speech. It says, "The federal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada must be free to consider all aspects of the system and to explore all possible solutions. It should not be limited by a narrow mandate or by restrictions on discussion." That leaves a hole large enough to drive a truck through for two-tier health care to be hooked up to that truck. We believe there should be a restriction, and that restriction should be one-tier, universal health care for all Ontarians. It's that simple. You're not willing to do that.

In the throne speech you talk about not running every school board out of Queen's Park. Now you criticize us for suggesting that local school boards have more authority.

It is clear that there is a time and place for tax cuts, but that time and place for tax cuts should not be when our health care system is in crisis, when our education system is in crisis and when Ontarians don't feel safe enough to drink water that comes out of the tap. That is not the time and place for tax cuts.

Again, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals believe in quality health care, quality education, clean water, clean

air, unlike the Mike Harris government, which believes in catering only to its wealthy friends.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Often I'm in quite good humour and even jovial; I'm not today. There will be no interruptions. I'll not warn the member for Mississauga South again.

Pursuant to standing order 37(a) the member for St Paul's has given notice of his or her dissatisfaction with the answer to his or her question given by the Attorney General concerning judicial independence and Bill 15. This matter will be debated at 6 pm. The Chair recognises the member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** No interruptions.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Mississauga South, come to order.

**Mr Bisson:** Mr Speaker, I'm sorry, but I think she has been quite reasonable. Margaret, you were doing a great job over there. I didn't think you were heckling, but anyway.

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to remind the member for Timmins-James Bay that we refer to other members by their ridings, not by their names. I wouldn't like to have to be pointing these things out all afternoon.

**Mr Bisson:** If I may, Mr Speaker, I don't think the member from Mississauga South was heckling. She was trying to warn one of her members not to heckle. It was the other way around, as I saw it.

Anyway, I want to come to the defence of the member from Mississauga South. Far too often she has been maligned in this House. Sometimes, Mr Speaker, we need to keep our sense of humour because otherwise we don't have anything left.

I rise today and am happy to have an opportunity to respond to the government's speech from the throne. I have to admit, sitting through that speech from the throne, it was one of the most difficult speeches I've had to sit through in a long time. I've been in this Legislature now for almost 12 years. I've had the opportunity to listen to a number of throne speeches, some of which I agreed with, some of which I didn't agree with. But this last one, I've got to say, was a horrid experience to sit through, because the government was trying to paint a picture that somehow or other everything the province of Ontario has done up to now when it comes to the public sector was somehow bad and that the only way we can make things right is to allow things to naturally evolve and naturally flow over to private sector control.

I, as a New Democrat and as a social democrat, have great difficulty accepting that argument, because it flies in the face of reality. I just want to give a couple of examples. One example is what I've been talking about most of the day today, which is Ontario Hydro. Ontario Hydro was put under public control and regulated a number of years ago for a very important reason. It was because under the old system, where you had a multitude of hydro companies out there trying to compete to provide hydro to different customers, there was a mis-

match of services, and prices were starting to go through the roof because people could sell to the highest bidder. So the government of the day decided it was smarter to put them under public control and to regulate them, because they recognized, back then that if you did that you would have the ability to be able to control the price to a certain extent and be able to provide a constant, safe supply of hydro to the customers of the province of Ontario.

As a result, our economy has boomed over the years. I'm not going to say for a second that hydro is the only thing that makes Ontario competitive, but it is one of the pieces of the puzzle in the Ontario economic pie that allows us to be competitive as compared to the American market.

This government says, "We've got to privatize everything that moves, because God knows there's nothing good in the public sector. The public sector can't do anything right," as they explained in the throne speech, "and so therefore we need to move forward with the privatization and deregulation of hydro."

I want to say, Mr Speaker, you are a consumer of hydro, as I am. How are you going to feel next year when you get your hydro bill, as people got their gas bills this year, and you find that you've had a 20% increase? Mike Harris gave you, in the one pocket, a tax cut, but you're going to be finding that out of the other pocket you'll be sending it back to some private corporation so they can put it in their pockets and run across the border, or wherever they come from, as shareholders of the new power corporation. As a consumer, you might have got a tax cut on one side, but you're going to be paying it out in user fees, or in this case in a bill to Ontario Hydro—or whatever the new company is—and it's going to cost you more money. How are you going to feel about that?

1700

How would you feel if you were a person on a lower income working for the minimum wage? Yes, there are hundreds of thousands of people in this province for whom the only job they can get is at the minimum wage. Imagine that. We haven't had an increase in the minimum wage in how long? Six or seven years? This government says it's OK for somebody to work for the minimum wage and never to get an increase, even though our party and our leader, Howard Hampton, have been pushing to get an increase in the minimum wage. But to boot, you're going to allow the new power corporation to give those very consumers a rate increase on hydro of 20%. How are they going to pay for that on the minimum wage?

It's not everybody who's fortunate enough to have a job that pays the kind of money we need to survive in today's economy. But no, the majority of jobs that have been created under the Mike Harris government have been those close to minimum wage or minimum wage jobs. That's the majority of the 800,000. We're now going to sock it to them with an increase of 20% on hydro. I say that is not a responsible thing to do on the part of a provincial government.

It doesn't end there. The industrial users of hydro in this province are going to get it socked to them as well, because if you're a big utilizer of hydro, if you're a mine, a paper mill, a sawmill, a car plant, an oil refinery, a plastic manufacturer, if you're anybody who needs to utilize hydro, what's going to happen to you? You're going to have your bill go up. What does that mean to you as a corporation in Ontario and as shareholders of that corporation? It's going to mean they will be less competitive. I thought this government thought that competition and making these corporations more competitive was the right thing to do. You know what? I agree. But that's not what you guys are doing. I talk to the people who are heads of corporations in my part of the province in northern Ontario and they're telling us they're scared to bejesus by what these hydro rate increases are going to mean to them.

We have sawmills across the province, paper mills, lumber mills, all kinds of manufacturing plants, secondary manufacturers, who are going to be socked with at least a 20% increase on hydro. I'm telling you—mark my words—it's going to mean job losses. Yes, the Mike Harris government is a job killer when it comes to the industrial sector of this province.

**Mr Marchese:** Why don't the corporations speak out, for heaven's sake?

**Mr Bisson:** Actually the corporations are starting to speak out. This is what is actually starting to amaze me to a certain extent, because originally when the bills were passed and discussion around deregulation was put forward, I was going to the corporate sector and saying, "Hey guys, watch yourselves. Higher rate increases are coming to a neighbourhood near you real quick." They said, "Gilles, we don't want to say anything because Mike Harris is our friend. We are supporters of Mike Harris. We would not want to say anything bad about him because he's our political ally." But do you know what? What a lot of these same people are starting to find is that when it comes to the pocket book, the pocket book doesn't have too many friends.

These guys and these women who run these organizations, these corporations, recognize they have a responsibility to the communities they operate in, a responsibility to their employees and to their shareholders. What the Tories are doing on hydro is going to hurt their bottom line. If anybody should understand that, it should be the Mike Harris government of Ontario.

But it doesn't end there. We take a look alone at what the government announced through this throne speech, which was just galling. The government stands up and starts talking about its privatization agenda. They're not satisfied to just privatize Ontario Hydro; they want to privatize anything that moves in the public sector.

They sit across the way and nod their heads. They think that's a good thing. Continue, guys. I'd like to put you in the back of my car, you know the thing that goes like that? That's what you guys do in a caucus meeting. Whatever Mike says, you nod your head. You don't use



your head. That's why God put them there. You can use them. It's as simple as that.

For example, the government is now moving to privatize the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, the ONTC. The government across the way, most members, wouldn't even know what that is. But it's like Highway 400 that you have down in Toronto. Can you imagine what would happen if the government of Ontario, Mike Harris, was to come in and say, "We've decided we're going to privatize all the 400 series highways across Ontario"? Can you imagine what would happen in that corridor between Cornwall and Windsor if we were to privatize all those highways and have to charge user fees to the utilizers of those highways? It would drive the Ontario economy into the ground, because we understand that transportation network is the cornerstone of the southwestern, southeastern and central economies of this province. We use the 400 series highways to transport goods from one plant to the other throughout southern Ontario. We understand the importance that highway series has to our economy.

Listen across the way: we in northern Ontario are a little bit further than from here to Hamilton. From here to Timmins, Kapuskasing, Hearst, Thunder Bay or anywhere in between, you're talking over 500 miles. The government of the day, some years ago, decided it was important to provide basic transportation infrastructure so that our corporations and our people are able to operate within the economy of Ontario. Now the government says, "We're going to privatize the ONTC." Boy, the brain trust must have stayed up all night thinking that one through.

We are on the verge of losing rail passenger service if this goes forward, and it means that all those people who need to use the train to move from one part of our province to the other don't have that option any more. That's a loss of convenience off the top, but they haven't stopped to think of what the next step is. The Ontario Northland runs the rail freight service, which is basically the industrial users. That's Columbia Forest Products, Tembec, the mill in Smooth Rock Falls, Abitibi-Price, the people in Kirkland Lake, the redwood plant, Grant waferboard, and all those plants, anywhere from North Bay up to Hearst—I would argue actually up to Moosonee and Moose Factory—are utilizing the rail freight service to move their goods out of their plants in northern Ontario and bring them to the market in the south. It makes a competitive advantage.

I sit down with sawmill operators in my part of the province—I'm glad the Minister of Natural Resources is here because he would know this to be true. There are plants out there that would like to have the ability to ship their goods by rail because it's cheaper, but because their plants are situated in places that don't have rail, it makes them much less competitive. In today's sawmill market and in today's dimensional wood market, it's really making it difficult for them to keep their doors open.

If you privatize the ONTC, what you end up with is a loss of direct subsidy from the province of Ontario of

about \$5 million, a loss of subsidy from the federal government of \$2.5 million, and then the loss of cross-subsidization from the profitable sections of the ONTC of some \$10 million. It means the rail freight services will no longer be able to rely on the cross-subsidization from the corporation and both levels of government to the tune of almost \$18 million. That means guess what? That cost is going to have to be passed on to the industrial users of the rail freight services.

What does that mean to Tembec, what does that mean to Abitibi-Price, what does that mean to Columbia Forest Products a couple of years down the road as this privatization initiative ends? They end up with the rail freight service completely privatized as a stand-alone organization, no longer a cross-subsidization from the rail passenger service that helps to pay to maintain the rail bed, no longer the cross-subsidization from the other components of the ONTC that make money and help to pay the freight services, no longer the subsidies from the federal and provincial governments. It means that the new private corporation, or the government, if they hang on to it, which I doubt, is going to have to pass the entire cost of running the ONR rail freight service on to the backs of the industrial users of northeastern Ontario. Yes, you've guessed it, backbenchers of the Tory government, it means an increase in rail freight service rates.

Here's the picture. In just two moves of your throne speech, we have increases on hydro of 20% this year with more coming to a neighbourhood near you as soon as it's privatized and the deregulation is finished by the spring of 2002. Then on top of that, you're going to have an increase in rail freight service rates for the industrial users on the ONR.

It doesn't take too much genius to figure out what that means to those people in northeastern Ontario. It means that those corporations that are relying on Ontario Hydro and on the ONR to be part of what makes them competitive are going to be in a difficult story. What does that meant to the people of Mattice? I look at my friend Annette, who's here as a page; I know her father and her uncle. They work at Columbia Forest Products; they work at the sawmill. They're the people who make our communities of Hearst, Mattice and all those other communities. You're putting those people's jobs in jeopardy. I'm not going to stand here as a member of this Legislature and just idly sit by and watch you guys do what you're doing, because you're dead wrong, and you have to understand that.

1710

So I say to you, do we want to find ways of being able to make those public corporations more accountable? Yes. Do we want to find a way of making those corporations operate in a more fiscally responsible way? The answer is yes. I think they do already, but we can always do a better job. But certainly you can do that under the auspices of a solidly run crown corporation; there's no reason why you can't.

One of the other things in the throne speech, as we're talking about the privatization agenda, is that the gov-

ernment is saying it also wants to look at possibly privatizing everything from LCBO or any other corporations that are out there. I say to the government, it's the wrong way to go. It's part of where we get our revenue to be able to pay for services such as health care, education and other services that are important to people. So I say to the government, you're wrong. You're wrong to try to privatize those things that basically make Ontario a competitive jurisdiction to do business in. I would at least think that a Conservative government in today's age would be able to figure that one out by themselves, without having to go through the process that has failed in provinces such as Alberta and in states such as California. So I say again to the government, you're certainly not going in the right direction.

L'autre point que je veux faire qui est très important, qui a été mentionné dans le discours du trône et encore ce qu'on voit avec les annonces qui ont été faites juste dernièrement par le gouvernement provincial, aujourd'hui avec la ministre et avant le premier ministre, c'est l'attaque qu'on voit jour après jour dans le gouvernement conservateur et les députés, les membres du cabinet et le premier ministre contre notre système d'éducation et, oui, contre les éducateurs.

Moi, je commence d'être écœuré au coton à voir la manière dont vous traitez le monde qui sont dans le domaine de l'éducation. Déjà, cet ouvrage est assez difficile. Ce n'est pas facile d'être toujours en bonne forme pour aller dans la classe chaque jour. On n'a pas besoin d'avoir un gouvernement qui se plante là, qui est toujours en train de taper sur la tête des enseignants et des enseignantes, et essaie de dire que ce qu'ils ont fait n'est pas important pour le monde de notre province.

On sait tous qu'une des affaires qui est l'acquis de la compétitivité de notre économie de l'Ontario, c'est de s'assurer qu'on a un système d'éducation qui fait du bon sens, un système d'éducation qui est basé sur certains principes, un système d'éducation qui donne à chaque personne, chaque jeune, chaque fille et chaque garçon dans notre système une opportunité d'être capable d'avancer et d'aller rechercher l'enseignement dont ils ont besoin pour être capables de prendre leur place dans l'économie.

Mais on voit premièrement au système primaire et secondaire le gouvernement, à chaque chance qu'il a eue, attaquer les enseignants de notre système; à chaque chance qu'ils ont eue d'ôter l'argent du système d'éducation, créer une crise et dire que quelqu'un d'autre l'a créée, et ça n'aide pas nos jeunes.

On voit justement que l'année passée, il y a eu 50 % de moins de personnes qui se sont inscrites pour entrer dans la profession d'enseignant et d'enseignante, une diminution de 50 %. On sait pourquoi les jeunes qui sortent du collège, de l'université aujourd'hui qui ont la chance d'aller en éducation disent, « Écoute, pourquoi devenir enseignant ou enseignante quand on a un gouvernement qui va nous taper sur la tête à toutes les deux minutes ? » Ils disent que ça ne fait pas de bon sens.

Mais ça ne finit pas là. Il n'y a pas seulement des attaques aux systèmes secondaire et primaire qu'on voit.

On voit ce qui est arrivé dans les universités et collèges de notre province : le gouvernement, depuis qu'il est venu en place, a augmenté les frais de cotisation de tous les programmes aux collèges et universités. Ils ont déréglément certains programmes au niveau universitaire. Là, ce qu'on voit, c'est les frais d'inscription qui augmentent au point où beaucoup de jeunes ne peuvent pas choisir d'aller à l'école, passé le secondaire, à l'université ou au collège.

Ce que je veut dire sur le point économique, c'est un très gros problème. Pourquoi ? Parce que ça veut dire, toutes ces personnes-là de 18 ans à 22 ans qui commencent à rentrer dans notre économie, qui pourraient donner quelque chose à notre province, qui pourraient fournir à notre économie les acquis nécessaires de développer une économie qui marche ne peuvent pas contribuer. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'ils ne peuvent pas payer le fric pour entrer aux collèges ou à travers les portes de nos universités.

Je dis que c'est un gros problème. C'est un plus gros problème pour ceux qui demeurent plus loin du centre de l'Ontario, qu'on appelle la grosse ville de Toronto. Imaginez-vous, monsieur, si vous demeurez à Nakina, vous demeurez à Long Lac, vous demeurez dans ces communautés qui sont éloignées, qui n'ont pas de collège ni d'université chez eux dans leur municipalité. Cela veut dire, aller à l'université, aller à un collège, ça devient plus difficile. Ces jeunes-là disent, « Je n'ai pas de choix : il faut que j'existe sans éducation. » Ça veut dire que ces jeunes-là sont ôtés du système, sont des citoyens qui ne pourront pas avoir la chance d'être capables de contribuer à notre économie d'une manière positive dans les années à venir.

So I say to the government across the way, your throne speech was nothing to really applaud. Your throne speech, as far as I'm concerned, was basically an all-right attack on those things that make our country strong, that make our province strong. We have developed in this nation and in this province an approach to how we treat ourselves and how we operate as governments toward our people over the last 130 years. What you're trying to do by way of your actions over the last six years and specifically out of your throne speech is to attack those things that are what have built this province and have built this nation. To you I say, I look forward to the day that you're voted out of office and we can come back to some real common sense in this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Dunlop:** It's always nice to make comments on the member for Timmins-James Bay. I appreciate hearing your comments. I know how passionately you speak about the north.

I don't know a lot about your transportation system in the north—that's my ignorance more than anything else—because it's so huge. I've been up on a couple of committee hearings into the north. I know that you personally use a plane at times to fly around because your riding is bigger than most countries in Europe. I do appreciate the value of any transportation system that you have, as well.



But what I would like to make a few comments on is the growing economy and the comments that Mr Clark might have referred to earlier, our transportation system throughout the province of Ontario. I think as a government we recognize the value of our transportation networks throughout the province. We are the one province in the country that receives no funding whatsoever from the federal government. I think every other province, with the exception maybe of Alberta, receives some kind of funding assistance.

I was pleased last year, in our 2000 budget, when Ernie Eves announced total expenditures of almost \$1 billion in the Ministry of Transportation budget. We laid down a lot of asphalt throughout the province. There has been a lot of reconstruction and redevelopment of different highways across the province, and I'm very pleased with that.

I think you bring out some good points with your comments on the value to industry of not only the transportation system but the hydro system as well. I know the value personally of knowing that the biggest purchasers of our wood in Simcoe county are companies like Tembec; they take our lumber and process it up north. I appreciate hearing your comments. I'm out of time already.

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** I had a chance to listen both in the House and on television to some of the comments by the member for Timmins-James Bay with respect to this government's throne speech. I've had a good opportunity this week to first-hand capture just a little more of the essence of the Harris government's communications machine as the Premier has been travelling about Ontario on the nearly dead tour. The Mike Harris nearly dead tour has made stops so far this week, setting a blistering pace across the breadth of this province.

I think the member has done a very excellent job of critiquing some of the problems between the language of the government and its delivery mechanism. "Accountability" is a word that they used eight to 11 times during the course of the throne speech, yet attempts to hold the government accountable are of course quite challenging.

We saw a government talk about the language of Smart Growth, but when asked to come up with some specific recommendations about what it might do, it fell rather short. We've seen a vacuum created by a government that even after a very lengthy layoff many people would comment upon as ineffective. The government hasn't been able to get its act together. I think the Premier's tour this week has done a lot of damage. It has, on one hand, demonstrated his unwillingness to be held accountable and, on the other, it has done a poor job of providing good messaging.

1720

When I was with him in London, he tried to meet with people in the hospital in an attempt to show the good things that had gone on. But against the efforts of his handlers, a constituent with very serious concerns about the way the health care system had addressed the health

needs of his child got hold of the Premier, and it was all he could do, before he jumped back into his chauffeured vehicle, to brush that constituent off.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Marchese:** I just want to congratulate my friend from Timmins-James Bay for the general remarks he made about the economy and the direction these folks are moving in, and the perspicacity and passion with which he speaks about northern issues, which very few on the other side could do, and I would add a couple of things.

What comes clearly from the throne speech is four major things. One, the way the Tories would deal with this slowing down of the economy is, first of all, to fire more civil servants, meaning more of them would be on the street, unemployment would be higher, they would collect unemployment insurance. At some point some of these folks—who knows?—might collect welfare. The second way they would deal with the slowing down of the economy is that they're going to cut and tighten ministries further in terms of making sure that, because there's no money, they argue, "We've got to cut more." The third thing, of course, is that they're so committed to the income tax cuts that they see that as a renewal of the economy as if that was a solution. Over the last four or five years Mike Harris was saying, remember, that he created a recession-proof economy. It's slowing down and, contrary to the fact that that isn't working, he's saying, "We're going to continue with the income tax cuts, to both the corporate and individual sectors." You've got to wonder about these people. The fourth point is, we're going to privatize some more, à la 407. You'll recall the 407, privatized for 99 years, complete control of this highway by the private sector, given to them courtesy of les Conservateurs for 99 years to raise rates as much as they want. In the last couple of years rates have gone up 50%. We can expect the same when they privatize Hydro, water, LCBO, if that's their intention, and God knows what more will come.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** All I can say to the two members opposite from the third party is, "You've got to be kidding." You're like Bob Rae. The other day on TV I saw Bob Rae, after five years, of course the biggest socialist this province has ever seen. The other day there's Bob Rae, the lawyer for all the lumber companies and the pulp and paper companies, down in the United States talking to groups in Washington about how wonderful free trade is and how important free trade is to the people of Canada, to the people of the United States and to economies throughout the world. Unbelievable. What a turn of events.

Now I hear the members opposite saying the same thing. All of a sudden they think businesses need to have lower costs. Unbelievable. Every time we've reduced costs to businesses, every time we've reduced the employer health tax, every time we reform WCB and reduce premiums by—the Minister of Labour is here—it's got to be 20% on average across the province, you screamed that it was the wrong thing to do, you screamed that they were our corporate buddies, what were we doing?

Now you stand up here and do a whole speech about how important it is to keep costs to businesses down. It was you—for the first three years you were in office, a 35% increase in the hydro rates. That's what you did. Finally you woke up and froze rates. So for eight years, because they did it for the last two and we've done it for five, we've frozen hydro rates in Ontario. So are rates going up 8% this year? They are. For the first time in eight years, rates have gone up. Do we like it? No.

Now that these guys have all of a sudden had this great big change in the way they view the world and now that they seem to understand that businesses have to have a competitive environment in order to succeed, in order to have jobs, so our pages' parents can have jobs, now that they've seen it, I can't wait until we bring in the legislation to reduce corporate taxes. I'm going to watch you guys. I'm going to see you stand up, and I know now you're going to vote for that legislation because you know that businesses need to be competitive in Ontario. Congratulations.

**Mr Bisson:** I was moved by those comments. First of all, I want to thank all those members who responded to my response to the speech from the throne. I would just say to the members across the way: listen, yes, if your government brings forward legislation that says we're going to lower corporate income tax, of course I'm going to say that's not what we should be doing. I believe that citizens of this province, corporations as well as individuals, have a responsibility to make sure to pay their fair share so that we're able to have the systems in place that make this province what it should be. Nobody across the way on the Conservative benches, I would think, would argue we don't need a system of health care, we don't need a system of education, we don't need public roads and all those other things that make this province what it is today and, yes, make it competitive. You can't get that stuff for free; somebody has to pay for it.

But where we have an ability to control costs, which is something that we've done fairly well in this province, that is, to provide a good system of public transportation when it comes to our system of highways and rail services so that we can get our goods to market, we have done so.

My argument is that what you're doing is taking away those things that we have built that have been the underpinning of what makes our economy successful. For those corporations, those industrial users along the ONR line from Moose Factory down to North Bay and south, it's going to be difficult for them to be able to operate and stay in business if their freight rates go up. It's as simple as that. We have found a way to keep them down and we have done that by way of the ONTC, both by way of subsidies from the federal and provincial governments and by cross-subsidization of other parts of that corporation.

On the question of Hydro, yes, again, if we're able to provide safe, affordable Hydro to industrial users and consumers across this province, why wouldn't we do so? We have seen in Alberta, we have seen everywhere else

where you've privatized and deregulated, it hasn't worked; it has led to higher prices. So let's not take away those things that make the Ontario economy competitive. That is the argument, and I hope you finally get it one of these days.

**Mr Hastings:** I'm most happy to join in this debate because I rejoice with my Grit friends across the floor. Today, ladies and gentlemen, Speaker, is the first time in the history of this Legislature since I got elected in 1995 that the Grits voted—it's on the record—for a tax reduction. Can you think of anything more revolutionary from a group of stand-pat, preservationist, status quo huggers?

It just boggles my mind to think that they actually voted for this private member's bill dealing with registered education savings plans. A tax credit, in effect, is a tax reduction. Generally speaking, the folks across the way have had the mantra of, "We can't afford a tax reduction in anything," because they have the rhetoric of, usually, it's risky, it's a risky proposition to give people back some of the money they earned, their money. But today we rejoice with them. They recognize reality at last. If that's one part of the leader of the official opposition's new plan, then I give them a little congratulations.

But I must say, I have gone through the remarks of the leader of the official opposition. We have heard today and since the Legislature resumed that they have a plan for just about everything. But when you start looking at the elements of the plan, whether it's a plan to reform education or a plan to deal with health care priorities, it usually comes up wanting. Why do I say that? If we look at what is the plan and what is their action, there's a big zigzag.

1730

The real example, the real test in terms of their idea of bringing peace to the schools—because there's a supposition that there are problems in our school system that can be attributed to a whole set of factors and actors—is the Hamilton school strike of last spring as a prime example of what the reality is and what the rhetoric is. What happened in that instance? What we had is a commitment from the House leader of the Grit party that they would vote to have the folks who were on strike in the Hamilton school situation back to work. But when it came to the actual vote that day last March, what happened? They didn't live up to their commitment. But that's nothing new nor surprising when you look at the realities of their plans for whatever and what the action is.

It's not a matter of having a plan—people can have plans, and that's admirable—but what is key is implementing a plan, is implementing ideas, and that's what the Mike Harris government has done for the last six years.

Just this week in the Legislature we heard from the member for Elgin. He is a big primary champion of agriculture. He says that we have no interest, have no concern about agriculture and helping out the producers. In point of fact, I want to put on the record today, as part of the throne speech debate, a letter from the Ontario



Corn Producer's Association dated April 19, 2001, to the Premier and to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Brian Coburn.

I want to quote directly from that letter, because it contrasts completely the reality to the remarks made by the member for Elgin in the past few days:

"Dear Mr Harris and Mr Coburn:

"On behalf of the 21,000 members of the Ontario Corn Producers' Association, I wish to express our sincere appreciation for the \$90 million in special assistance provided to Ontario grain and oilseed farmers in early April. The cheques were distributed within days of your announcement on March 28, and the delivery mechanism was consistent with advice which was provided by Ontario farm groups"—through our good organization, Agricorp. "The special assistance will be of major benefit in helping crop producers plant crops this spring despite the depressed crop prices which have been caused by huge direct subsidy payments in the United States. These subsidies have tripled since 1997, according to the US department of agriculture."

I further want to elaborate on this letter to show where this government is going in its concern and having agriculture as a priority, that we act on the concerns of farmers and a lot of other people:

"Major changes have occurred in corn farming in Ontario over the past decade. Ontario farmers continue to be world leaders in the rate of adoption of new technology and in supporting research and new market development initiatives. Value-added processing has been encouraged so that most Ontario corn exports are now in the form of processed food and industrial products versus unprocessed grain corn as was the case a few years ago. New products such as automotive fuels and 'bio-plastics' are being introduced and are expected to represent rapid-growth markets in the decade ahead. Value adding means more employment for Ontario citizens and added economic activity for the entire province."

Now contrast that response to the corn producers and to other oilseed farmers in that sector. What happened? They had been asking for support for a long time. What did we do? We delivered on our part of the commitment. But as the member for Elgin so adequately explained the other day, or inadequately, failed to explain, where is the federal counter-response to the problems of our farmers as we go into this new year?

We're still waiting for financial help from the federal Minister of Agriculture. In fact, they can't even deal with the issue of the fungus problem for Prince Edward Island potato producers, which we rely on in this Ontario economy. So let's let the record be corrected that we are interested in agriculture and we've acted in many instances—you can go back to the hog producers many years ago. This government has an empathetic, compassionate record dealing with farmers. The challenge is, how are we ever going to get out of the arrangement we're in in terms of how the Europeans and the Americans are oversubsidizing their producers? That's

the key for the long-term sustainability of the farm sector.

You may find it quite surprising that an urban member would be interested in agriculture. But in point of fact, where do you get your food from? You have to eat. You have to have farmers who are productive and healthy and happy. If you don't, you are importing more food. That's just one example of action, not planning, as the Grits so favour to talk about.

The next item I want to turn to is in relation to the whole electricity restructuring issue and the issue of competitiveness in the Canadian economy. In the last few days, we have heard from members opposite, especially from the NDP, that the idea of commercialization or privatization of a major supply like electricity is not in the public interest. But as the minister said recently, having an Ontario Hydro monopoly was good for the time it came about in 1903, the early part of the 20th century. Today we're no longer in that situation. We are in a competitive situation regarding the supply of electricity, not only in North America but throughout the world.

While the member for Timmins-James Bay raises the spectre of increased pricing, what he is missing in this whole debate over deregulation or privatization or commercialization is not that issue at all. The issue really is: is there going to be an adequate supply of power in the coming years? Will we have an adequate supply of power that will drive prices down? That's the fundamental question.

What you don't hear from members opposite is that there are places in the world—if they'd only look and check, there are Web sites, there's all kinds of information available. California and Alberta are not the problems we face. It's not the same at all. We need to look, and they need to look, at experiences in places such as the United Kingdom, Pennsylvania and most of the states in the great commonwealth of Australia. They need to do a mind-stretching exercise. That's the key to solving this problem: will there be adequate supply? When you look at what is going to come on-line in the next two to three years, in the stream right now: major new producers. It's competition that drives prices down.

You never hear from our friends opposite hand-wringing over the privatization or commercialization of Air Canada or, of all crown corporations, Canadian National. If you look today at what Canadian National is, compared to 15 years ago, you would hardly recognize it. Do we hear hand-wringing from those folks over how the cost of transporting goods has increased? It hasn't. It's gone in the other direction when you look at Canadian National. Why did the federal government denationalize CN? Because they had to get out of the whole arrangement. When you look at the rail transportation industry in this country and North America today, CN is a major supplier of moving goods and services nationally and north-south. In fact, they were blocked from buying a major US railroad.

How come that's the reality in that area, if electricity is that much different? Why don't we hear from these

folks about the deregulation of the telecommunications industry? You never hear "boo," but guess what, folks? The price of phone service is down. Why? Because there's competition, there are different players. You've got Sprint, you've got AT&T. Sure, Bell's still there providing the wires.

1740

So it's absolutely essential that we move, not on a privatization agenda—it's moving on a reality agenda. Do you want to be connected to the real world, where you have global commerce, where probably four of every five jobs in this province are related, either directly or nearly directly, to trade?

We trade with the Americans. We trade with the rest of the world. Why do you think these folks were meeting in Quebec City? Because they want, over time, to solve the problems of poverty. They won't be solved by putting up walls and more tariffs. They'll be torn down and we'll have more jobs and reduce poverty.

Canada and this province have enormous potential in exporting goods and services to Mexico, as an example. If you look at what is happening in the real world, a lot of Ontario citizens winter in different parts of Mexico today. We get all the newcomers coming to this country, whereby we can take significant advantage of their culture and diverse experience in business to set up new businesses.

It's been mentioned across the way by the Grits that they're trying to portray themselves as this new management team with a plan: "We have a plan for health care reform. We have a plan for education." What they don't want to talk about when they talk about these plans for working families—which we've already implemented, by the way; they're always catching up. We have implemented plans aplenty in reduced taxes, in reduced red tape, to create more jobs in small businesses. The member for Brampton Centre was talking the other day about the business impact test.

How do you think all these 825,000 jobs came about? It wasn't because we stayed on the same track, that you had to go through all the paperwork and go from one place to another when you were starting a new business. No, we put in a place where you could go and do it all at once—WSIB stuff, get your incorporation papers. I suspect some of the folks across the way would prefer that we'd stay in the old mode, especially the NDP with their rant on the privatization: "Keep the old monopoly on electricity."

The folks across the way talk about a plan to bring about better health care. Their favourite slogan—I had to face it in the election, and we see it across there every day. The secret slogan is two-tier health care. If you even mention the phrase, you're labelled for life as if there's a huge risk and it's politically incorrect. You can't talk about the challenges and the problems we have in health care.

Of course, the member for St Paul's said, "We're against two-tier health care." I watched part of that show before I moved on to something more interesting. But in

point of fact, they were in favour of two-tier health care. If you go back to the Peterson regime, there were services that were paid for by ordinary Ontario citizens. Even the NDP in British Columbia had delisted services.

They want to create the illusion, the impression that everything is free, that you should pay for nothing and that the citizen is just sort of an empty receptacle. He or she gets services from the state and can go and get more and more and there's no end, you never come to a crunch point.

I was talking to a young gentleman out here today from the Ontario student federation about our bill. We had a little discussion about the critical choices that the next generations—it's right here today actually—are going to be facing. If you want to finance health care up to 100 cents on the dollar, and you haven't any money left for education, which we require, where are you going to get that money? We know where those folks will get it. We'll go to the old plan—code word "plan," but the real words are "tax addiction," "spending addiction." That's the real part of their plan. That's the fundamental here.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Hastings:** You've got it, a tax addiction they've had for years and years.

We've gone from 37 cents per capita up to 44 cents roughly in the last six years.

With that rate-of-trend analysis, both in education and health care spending, somebody is going to have to make some choices. I know they don't want to hear about these choices. They just say, "Oh, we don't want two-tier health care." It's like a slogan. If you keep saying that mantra, things will end, "Things will be OK. Just spend more money." Well, we are spending a pile of money. The Minister of Finance said recently, "Where's our improvements?" He asked this question. We've made substantial improvements, but do you know what? There's always more to make, but money is not necessarily the solution to some of these complex challenges.

I have to really point out finally, folks, and going back to the administration of their own research program, I want to read into the record a motion that Mr Bradley opposed back in 1994 regarding the caucus support estimates representing the over-expenditure in the Grits' case, the 1993-94 estimates, of \$336,018. Guess what? Mr Bradley opposed that that be dealt with. That's the kind of plan and record they have for dealing with the issues of today.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Marchese:** Just a couple of comments to the member from Etobicoke North. He talks about the spending addiction the other parties have as it relates to the health care system, yet spending in the health care system and in that ministry has skyrocketed under this government. How could they be so preoccupied about spending and how could the member argue that it's impossible to continue with these tremendous expenditures on health, because under you—

**Mr Dunlop:** Long-term-care beds, hospitals.



**Mr Marchese:** No, but under you guys, costs have gone up incredibly. How could you let that happen? If you are arguing that that's not good, why would you in the first place increase those costs to the ministry? You're saying you don't have the money. The member from Etobicoke North says money is not a solution. But why would you increase the cost of the health care system to such an extent if you feel it's so bad? Why didn't you fix it while you were there? That is the point I'm arguing.

You can't have it both ways. You think spending is not good, but you've been spending a lot and now you're saying we've got to cut down again. I don't get it. Is your commitment to primary care so that you can have 24-hour services in the community, where the costs are cheaper and you have doctors on salary? Is that your commitment, or is your commitment to privatizing more and more of our health care system? Under you guys, the out-of-pocket costs are 35% and soon the out-of-pocket costs are going to be 50%, to the extent that you could have a two-tier system. That's the direction you are leaning in. I am asking you, John, be clear. Where are you moving to? Be clear with us.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I really want to pay some respect to the member from Etobicoke North because he certainly has, I believe, coined a very defining term for the Liberals. I think that tax addiction is more like a tax addict. Every time, you see these Dalton dollars floating out the window. Every time he speaks: the Dalton spend-o-meter. Tax addiction. I want the viewers today to imprint this in their minds clearly: "tax addiction" is a Liberal term attributed by the member for Etobicoke North, and it should be recorded in Hansard. Now it is.

1750

But one of the themes he spoke on touched my heart, actually. When I think of my riding of Durham, Minister Coburn was there just a short time ago, along with the member for Simcoe North, who spoke earlier, and the member for Peterborough. There were 400 members of the Ontario Corn Producers' Association, district 4. I'm going to name the 400 of them here shortly.

*Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** No, out of respect I think I will, actually. It was David Frew, Rick Geisberger, Steve Grove, Trevor Nesbitt, Hubert Schillings, Ted Watson, Kevin Werry, Joe Christl, Bert Werry, Dale Mountjoy, to name but eight, the famous phrase used by Mr Conway.

I do want to say that the minister at that time was listening to the plight of the corn and oilseeds people. We're talking about \$70 million. Let's roll the clock back. The federal government first promised \$800 million, the federal Liberals, the tax addiction people. Then they rolled it back to \$500 million. Our Minister Coburn announced not just \$70 million in Ontario dollars but \$90 million. There are 21,000 farmers in this province, thanks to our minister, who now have the money to put the seeds in the soil.

**Mr Bryant:** The government members on the other side of the House are having a lot of fun joking over

wordplay. They were talking about, I think, evictions. I'd like to talk about the evictions that are taking place in St Paul's as a result of the disastrous housing policy instituted by this government. Nothing, of course, in this throne speech for tenants. Of course, they would be the enemy of the government through their legal tool, the tenant destruction act.

Evictions have gone up in the city of Toronto by about 60%. In the riding of St Paul's, where 68% are tenants, they're facing an impossible situation. You were talking about evictions, so I want to keep on this point. The problem is this: on the one hand, the vacancy rate is less than 1%; on the other hand, above-the-guideline increases are such that there is no rent control—

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Stop the clock, please. The Minister of Labour on a point of order?

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** Actually, I was going to move a motion, but it's OK. I apologize for interrupting. I'm sorry about your time.

**Mr Bryant:** As I was saying, with the vacancy rate so low, there is no free market; the market, in fact, is closed. At the same time, above-the-guideline increases mean that rents are increasing about 10%. There is no affordable housing being built in the city of Toronto, so what does that mean? They feel, because of the rising rents, that they need to leave, or in the case of those on a fixed income—you talked about addiction; let's talk about eviction—they get evicted. Under the new laws, they get evicted with a far smaller notice period. Where do they go? If they leave, of course, they have to go into an apartment where there is no rent control. That's vacancy decontrol.

I can tell you that the people of St Paul's don't find the wordplay over "addiction" a laughing matter. They're living with the realities of eviction under this government every single day.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I just want to compliment my friend from Etobicoke North on the comments that he made today with respect to the throne speech.

I do appreciate the fact that the member from the NDP doesn't understand the parts and intricacies of his debate. But I thought it was a fair and reasonable dissertation with respect to the policies of this government and the differences between us and both opposition parties.

I might say it's interesting, as we move along through the six or seven years that we've been in power, to find that the opposition parties endorse programs and platforms that we put forward in 1995 and they slowly came around to our way of thinking, in smaller increments. We used to talk about a 30% tax cut and they talked about a 10% tax cut. We talked about reducing the public service by 20% and they talked about reducing the public service by 5% or 10%. It was just a matter of increments. They were simply that much further behind the public mood, and we captured that mood. I think the member for Etobicoke North explained it well.

I say to the member for the NDP who was speaking earlier, it's not surprising you can't understand the approach we're taking. In my mind, the approach that was taken in Quebec City and the approach you took in

Quebec City in your attendance there and the kinds of issues that you were trying to deal with were truly ridiculous. The processes are, in any free trade negotiation, that the parties negotiate free trade and then it's up to those Parliaments to endorse or not to endorse free trade. That's where the debate takes place. To hold yourself out as some kind of protector of the Canadian institution when you're standing in the place being tear-gassed, arguing and screaming and claiming you're not having your rights is not fair.

The process is simple. You negotiate a free trade agreement. You take it to Congress, you take it to Parliaments and then the Parliaments vote on those particular issues. That's how it has always worked. I hope to expand our free trade, because I remember when you guys were opposed, but apparently—

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The member for Etobicoke North has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Hastings:** I'd like to congratulate the member for Durham and the member for Etobicoke Centre—the member for Trinity-Spadina spoke this morning of course—and the member for St Paul's for their comments.

What I was trying to drive at in this particular presentation is that there is a fundamental contrast between us as a party in government and the folks across the way. They're trying to draw some lines in the sand, but when you really look at what's behind the plan—that's a favourite word that seems to have come up—there's some—and you have to be fair to them, they're trying. The Leader of the Opposition has the odd idea. There's no coherent, consistent approach to things.

When you look at what we're doing, we're not only following a plan, we're acting on a plan, and we get things done, for example, Minister Coburn's stuff, Minister Young's stuff. If it weren't for the Attorney General in this province, where would this government be in helping newcomers to get legal aid and to get the feds to pay their portion of the legal aid that they should have been paying for the last number of years? We always have to be demanding it. What do we hear from the folks across the way? I'll raise the issue again. They're for better skills and helping young people. Why don't they help us get the nearly, I estimate, \$670 million from Minister Stewart at HRDC as our real contribution out of the UI fund to help skilled people become better skilled in this country for upgrading and retraining in this province as shown in the throne speech? We're the ones taking action. We're not talking about a plan.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Pursuant to standing order 37, the motion that this House is now

adjourned is deemed to have been made. The member from St Paul's has given notice that he is dissatisfied with the answer to the question today given by the Attorney General. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Just as a clarification, do I have five minutes or is it five minutes in total?

**Interjection:** Five minutes each.

**Mr Bryant:** I've got five minutes?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

**Mr Bryant:** I say to the minister, I can't promise to do this for every question or late show, but I'm going to try to keep the rhetoric down on this question because it is an issue that falls in that non-political part of your responsibilities as the Attorney General under the Ministry of the Attorney General Act and under our Constitution.

The issue is just this: we all know in Ontario that judicial independence and judicial accountability has become an issue. It became an issue because the Attorney General of Ontario supported a private member's bill sponsored by the member for Scarborough Centre, which passed on second reading, called the Judicial Accountability Act. I'm going to read into the record the comments from people who have said it is shocking that the Attorney General of Ontario would support a bill that would jeopardize judicial independence. If I have time, I'll make the case as to why it did.

1800

As a result of that, it becomes particularly important that the Attorney General of the day make his position known as to whether or not the Attorney General ministry is going to continue to support judicial accountability legislation or, on the other hand, are they going to follow a different practice, adopted by a previous minister, in which he explicitly would oppose judicial accountability legislation? Let me say at the outset that I know very well that private members' business is different than public business. But I also know that when issues become political, it becomes important for ministers to take a stand on particular bills. For example, my phony gun bill, my private member's bill, was rejected initially by the Attorney General of Ontario, only to eventually be adopted and accepted by the Premier. That's a political issue involving a private member's bill. The government of the day supported Ms Mushinski's bill on judicial accountability. So the question is, will you support Mr Wood's bill on judicial accountability?

Attorney General Flaherty said on April 20 of the member for Scarborough Centre's bill that "I think it addresses a need which people have to get some kind of an accurate rating on what sentences are done." These are his words. The Ottawa Citizen then replies in an editorial and says, "That Ontario Attorney General Jim Flaherty reacted positively to this is shocking. No government



should single out certain judges for public pressure tactics.”

That's one view, and that was the view of Minister Young's predecessor. What's another view? Well, Minister Harnick said in a published report—June 21, 2000, in the *Globe and Mail*—“I was proud to say I made it clear quickly what my position was' when he quashed similar legislation years ago.” What legislation was he talking about? Bill 130, introduced by the MPP for Oshawa, Mr Ouellette, and here's what the government of the day said during debate on that bill. The parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General said of Bill 130, “The difficulty with the bill—and here's the major problem—is that it interferes with the independence of the judiciary.” He went on to say, “That's the difficulty with the bill. The Attorney General is strongly opposed”—the government said May 29, 1997. “As his parliamentary assistant, I am strongly opposed to Bill 130 with respect to the amendments to the Courts of Justice Act.”

OK. So I say to the minister, are you in favour of this private member's bill or are you against it? It becomes particularly important when in December—

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** Tell us where you stand on it.

**Mr Bryant:** I do not support the private member's bill.

In December of this year, on December 18, the minister—then, I understand, not the minister—voted on first reading in favour of Mr Wood's bill. Again, I know that first reading is pro forma, but we all know that the last word from you, Minister, thus far has been that you support this bill. You can't tell me politically for a second, with a straight face, that supporting a bill on first reading is always pro forma. Yesterday would be a case in point.

Minister, you can't have it both ways. In other circumstances, fine, you could say, “I'm in favour of judicial independence,” but not be critical of a private member's bill, but in this case it is necessary, because the issue is before the province and in fact falls directly within your responsibility under the Attorney General Act, under section 5, as a superintendent of the administration of justice. Will you stand up and tell us what your position is on the bill? Do you support the bill like Mr Flaherty would have, or, like Mr Harnick, would you oppose the bill? Just yes or no. Do you support the bill or don't you?

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I appreciate having an opportunity to respond to what I say, as respectfully as possible, are to me rather curious comments from the member for St Paul's. In fact, the very fact that we are here discussing this issue this day again, after it had been thoroughly discussed this afternoon, to me is somewhat surprising.

I take issue with the member's statements. I take issue with the premise of his statements. As I stated only a few hours ago in this very assembly and I will say again—I

will say it as emphatically as possible—I believe in judicial independence. I will fight wholeheartedly for judicial independence.

Let's be clear: this debate isn't about judicial independence. What this debate is about is the privilege that members of this assembly, members of Parliament, have to raise issues that are important to them, to raise issues that are important to their constituents and to encourage reasonable and thoughtful debate on these issues.

Now, it's particularly curious that we're here this evening talking about this issue, because members of the other side of the House, including the member for St Paul's—on every occasion he can find he comes forward and complains at great length about the lack of respect that exists within this assembly, that exists for parliamentary traditions and that exists for members. In fact, the member rose this very day and this very morning stood up in this hall and said things that would suggest very clearly that democracy is dead—dead democracy unless we change things.

The member for St Paul's was involved in a debate and I'm going to quote what he said this morning, “Everybody loses confidence in government and our Legislature if we feel that we can't get the answers, if they're somehow hidden,” and I wholeheartedly agree. I agree completely, but I would ask the member how people watching today are supposed to retain confidence in their government, in this Legislature, in the individuals who work here each and every day representing the people of this province, if we are prevented from raising questions and concerns that are being discussed in our very ridings.

The member for St Paul's obviously thought that the matter debated this morning was one of importance or he wouldn't have been here and he wouldn't have stood and spoken to it, but who is he to judge for this House, as it seems he wishes to do, what issue should and should not be debated in this Assembly? I would say that he has no right to be the judge and jury on that debate.

The question before us this afternoon is not whether the substance of a particular bill that will follow its course through the legislative process—it's not whether it's a good or bad bill at first reading, and by the way, let there be no mistake, there were members of the Liberal Party yesterday morning who during the voice vote voted for Mr Wood's bill. There should be no doubt about that. And the answer has to be, yes, we have to respect the fact that private members of this assembly have the right to raise issues for discussion, debate and ultimate vote.

If we as parliamentarians are not here to debate the issues of the day, then I would ask the member for St Paul's, what are we doing here? Barring reasonable questions from being raised in this chamber is the very recipe for the dead democracy the member opposite spoke of this morning, and if the member for St Paul's wishes to stifle debate, then our House will truly become a very barren and desolate chamber.

Let me say in conclusion very clearly that it will be the member for St Paul's, the Liberal member opposite—

the same one who rose this morning to complain about the lack of democracy, the lack of the right of individual parliamentarians to stand on their feet and discuss issues without being confined or constrained in this way or that way—it will be the same member who will be the pallbearer for the death of democracy.

**The Acting Speaker:** There being no further matter to debate, I deem that the motion that this House do adjourn is carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow, 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1809.*

## ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
4	114	1	11	<b>Mr Hastings:</b> It may be a laughing matter to the



<b>THRONE SPEECH DEBATE</b>		<b>Member's privilege</b>	
Mr Dunlop.....	179, 182, 186, 190	The Speaker.....	159
Mr Caplan.....	181, 183	<b>Visitors</b>	
Mr Bisson.....	182, 186, 192	The Speaker.....	163
Mr Hastings.....	182, 192, 196	<b>Workers' Memorial Day</b>	
Mr Agostino.....	184, 187	Mr Stockwell.....	167
Mr Marchese.....	185, 191, 194	Mr Agostino.....	168
Mr Bryant.....	186, 195	Mr Hampton.....	169
Mr Smitherman.....	191	<b>Business of the House</b>	
Mr Maves.....	191	Mr Klees.....	179
Mr O'Toole.....	195	<b>Consideration of Bill 13</b>	
Mr Stockwell.....	195	The Speaker.....	179
Debate deemed adjourned.....	198		
<b>OTHER BUSINESS</b>		<b>ADJOURNMENT DEBATE</b>	
<b>Consideration of Bill 13</b>		<b>Judicial appointments</b>	
The Speaker.....	159	Mr Bryant.....	196
Mr Stockwell.....	159	Mr Young.....	197
		<b>Erratum.....</b>	198
<b>TABLE DES MATIÈRES</b>			
<b>Jeudi 26 avril 2001</b>			
<b>AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS</b>	<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'emblème franco-ontarien, projet de loi 18,</b> <i>M. Lalonde</i> Adoptée..... 160 <i>M. Lalonde</i> ..... 161	<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant le Code de la route (protection de la jeunesse), projet de loi 23, <i>M. Bartolucci</i></b> Adoptée..... 162	
<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'épargne en prévision de l'avenir de nos enfants (modification de la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu), projet de loi 4, <i>M. Hastings</i></b> Adoptée..... 155	<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'harmonisation des prêts d'études de l'Ontario, projet de loi 19, <i>M<sup>me</sup> Cunningham</i></b> Adoptée..... 161	<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités (locaux de divertissement pour adultes), projet de loi 24, <i>M. Bartolucci</i></b> Adoptée..... 162	
<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'obligation de rendre compte des voyages ministériels, projet de loi 2, <i>M. Bartolucci</i></b> Adoptée..... 155	<b>Loi de 2001 sur le bon samaritain, projet de loi 20, <i>M. Gilchrist</i></b> Adoptée..... 161	<b>DEUXIÈME ET TROISIÈME LECTURES</b>	
<b>PREMIÈRE LECTURE</b>	<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil exécutif, projet de loi 21, <i>M. Smitherman</i></b> Adoptée..... 161	<b>Loi de 2001 sur le bon samaritain, projet de loi 20, <i>M. Gilchrist</i></b> Adoptée..... 162	
<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation (rétablissement de la paix dans les écoles), projet de loi 16, <i>M. McGuinty</i></b> Adoptée..... 160	<b>Loi de 2001 sur la protection des enfants qui se livrent à la prostitution, projet de loi 22, <i>M. Bartolucci</i></b> Adoptée..... 162	<b>DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE</b>	
<b>Loi de 2001 sur le patrimoine naturel de l'Ontario, projet de loi 17, <i>M. Gilchrist</i></b> Adoptée..... 160		<i>M. Bisson</i> ..... 190 Débat présumé ajourné..... 198	

# CONTENTS

Thursday 26 April 2001

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

<b>Saving for Our Children's Future Act (Income Tax Amendment), 2001,</b>	
Bill 4, <i>Mr Hastings</i>	
Mr Hastings	139, 142, 146
Mrs Bountrogianni	140
Mr Marchese	142, 143
Mr Cordiano	142
Mrs Ecker	143
The Deputy Speaker	143
Mr Beaubien	145
Mr O'Toole	145
Mr Arnott	146
Agreed to	155
<b>Ministerial Travel Accountability Act, 2001, Bill 2, <i>Mr Bartolucci</i></b>	
Mr Bartolucci	147, 154
Mr Dunlop	148
Mrs Pupatello	149
Ms Martel	149
Mr Tascona	151
Mr Bryant	151
Mr Martin	152
Mr Tilson	153
Ms Di Cocco	153
Agreed to	155

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Community colleges</b>	
Mr Bountrogianni	156
<b>Volunteers</b>	
Mr Munro	156
Mr Hardeman	156
Mr Dunlop	157
Mrs Marland	158
<b>Highway tolls</b>	
Mr Agostino	156
<b>Farm practices protection</b>	
Mr Peters	157
<b>Summit of the Americas</b>	
Ms Churley	157
<b>House sittings</b>	
Mr Bradley	158
<b>Government travel expenditures</b>	
Mr Bartolucci	158

## MOTIONS

<b>House sittings</b>	
Mrs Ecker	160
Agreed to	160

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Education Amendment Act (Restoring Peace in Our Schools), 2001,</b>	
Bill 16, <i>Mr McGuinty</i>	
Agreed to	160
Mr McGuinty	160
<b>Ontario Natural Heritage Act, 2001,</b>	
Bill 17, <i>Mr Gilchrist</i>	
Agreed to	160
Mr Gilchrist	160
<b>Franco-Ontarian Emblem Act, 2001,</b>	
Bill 18, <i>Mr Lalonde</i>	
Agreed to	160
Mr Lalonde	161
<b>Ontario Student Loan Harmonization Act, 2001,</b>	
Bill 19, <i>Mrs Cunningham</i>	
Agreed to	161
Mrs Cunningham	161
<b>Town of Newmarket, 2001, Bill Pr9,</b>	
<i>Mrs Munro</i>	
Agreed to	161
<b>Premium Auto Collision Inc. Act, 2001, Bill Pr7, <i>Mr Hastings</i></b>	
Agreed to	161
<b>Good Samaritan Act, 2001, Bill 20,</b>	
<i>Mr Gilchrist</i>	
Agreed to	161
Mr Gilchrist	161
<b>Executive Council Amendment Act, 2001, Bill 21, <i>Mr Smitherman</i></b>	
Agreed to	161
Mr Smitherman	161
<b>Wycliffe College Act, 2001, Bill Pr2,</b>	
<i>Mr Smitherman</i>	
Agreed to	162
<b>Protection of Children involved in Prostitution Act, 2001, Bill 22,</b>	
<i>Mr Bartolucci</i>	
Agreed to	162
Mr Bartolucci	162
<b>Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Youth Protection), 2001, Bill 23,</b>	
<i>Mr Bartolucci</i>	
Agreed to	162
Mr Bartolucci	162
<b>Municipal Amendment Act (Adult Entertainment Parlours), 2001,</b>	
Bill 24, <i>Mr Bartolucci</i>	
Agreed to	162
Mr Bartolucci	162

## SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

<b>Good Samaritan Act, 2001, Bill 20,</b>	
<i>Mr Gilchrist</i>	
Agreed to	163
<b>STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES</b>	
<b>Early years centres</b>	
Mr Baird	163
Mr Hampton	166
<b>Education reform</b>	
Mrs Ecker	164
Mr McGuinty	166
Mr Hampton	167
<b>Post-secondary education</b>	
Mrs Cunningham	165

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Education labour disputes</b>	
Mr McGuinty	170, 171
Mrs Ecker	170, 171
Mr Hampton	172
Mr Stockwell	172
<b>Hydro rates</b>	
Mr Hampton	173
Mr Wilson	173
<b>Ministry of the Environment staff</b>	
Mr McGuinty	174
Mrs Witmer	174
<b>Education reform</b>	
Mr Wettlaufer	174
Mrs Ecker	175
<b>Children's Secretariat</b>	
Mrs Dombrowsky	175
Mr Baird	175
<b>Student loans</b>	
Mr Galt	175
Mrs Cunningham	175
<b>Child poverty</b>	
Mr Martin	176
Mr Baird	176
<b>Judicial appointments</b>	
Mr Bryant	177
Mr Young	177
<b>Living Legacy</b>	
Mr Stewart	178
Mr Snobelen	178
<b>Family Responsibility Office</b>	
Mr Curling	178
Mr Baird	178

Continued overleaf



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Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

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**Friday 27 April 2001**

**Vendredi 27 avril 2001**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Gary Carr

**Président**  
L'honorable Gary Carr

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Friday 27 April 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Vendredi 27 avril 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### BACK TO SCHOOL ACT (TORONTO AND WINDSOR), 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LE RETOUR À L'ÉCOLE (TORONTO ET WINDSOR)

Mr Stockwell moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to resolve labour disputes affecting the Toronto District School Board and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board / *Projet de loi 13, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail qui touchent les conseils scolaires de district appelés Toronto District School Board et Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board.*

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I won't take up a lot of time to begin this debate. I'll use about 15 minutes.

Let me just get off the mark by saying that it was never our intention to become involved in this particular labour dispute. I think all parties have agreed primarily that when it comes to labour disputes in any sector, the public sector, particularly those that provide services that would be quasi-essential, it's been the history of this place that it is with a great deal of concern before a Legislature or a party gets involved in these disputes.

There's been a situation in Windsor and Toronto where there has been a strike of many, many weeks by the support staff workers. We as a government, after cajoling and discussing this internally and also saying very publicly that we are going to have to get involved and we don't want to get involved, tried to encourage the parties to reach what we considered to be a mutually acceptable settlement between them. Obviously that did not occur.

What happened after is unusual in this place, from my experience and when I checked the Hansard and the records of this place. Normally, when you reach a stage where the government has become involved in a collective bargaining process, they bring forward legislation in the four-, five- or six-week range and they ask for unanimous consent to order the workers back to work

because the schoolchildren are in jeopardy or face the potential jeopardy of losing their year.

When we did this first in Hamilton-Wentworth, we ended up being shut down for about a day before the kids could get back to school. At that time, when we voted on the bill, only the government members in this House voted in favour of putting those kids back to school in Hamilton-Wentworth. I personally found that discouraging, because when I was part of an opposition party, when these things happened, I co-operated, understanding that there was a broader issue here, and the issue was that the children needed to get back to school. As we say in this House, in a wink and a nod you put them through—15 minutes, sometimes an hour, tops.

We are facing an awkward situation here, because we are being opposed by one of the opposition parties in putting this bill before the House and getting the kids back to school. That's why we're here today, in the unusual circumstance of sitting on a Friday.

Let me say that I think the piece of legislation we've put forward in this House is a reasonable piece of legislation, which if adopted will solve this problem. I ask the members of the House to read it carefully and understand that if this piece of legislation passes today, the schools can be cleaned up this weekend and probably the vast majority of schools could be opened come Monday.

We've been drafted into this dispute. We have taken the action necessary. I understand that across the floor there were resolutions and processes put out. I can only say to the members across the floor, when you have to order people back to work, it has to be by legislation, and "by legislation" means it has to be by binding arbitration. You have to force the parties to a binding arbitrator. The arbitrator then has the power to make decisions, and in the ensuing days, while hearing the arguments, the schools reopen and the kids go back to school.

So this is not an unusual approach this government has adopted. I would say that, to a person in this caucus, there is wholehearted support for this piece of legislation before this House.

I would say to this House that it's a reasonable expectation that we should see, with some degree of certainty and speed, that this bill would be passed today, proclaimed tonight, the schools cleaned on the weekend and opened on Monday. That's basically the thrust of the motion; that's basically the thrust of the legislation.

To answer some questions about the legislation by the third party with respect to the appointment of arbitrators, there was some question about the capabilities of one of

the arbitrators. I myself personally investigated that arbitrator, Mr Stephen Raymond. I canvassed some lawyers in the community out there, from both sides. He was appointed as a neutral to the Ontario Labour Relations Board. I asked specifically about the decisions he has taken, and there seemed a reasonable expectation he could provide a neutral, arbitrated settlement. He has done so. He has done so in his year at the board in hearing cases. I have not received one complaint about him from management or from labour. The other gentleman, who would handle the Windsor situation, is equally as qualified.

I don't want to prolong this day, but let me say this: I understand how this Legislature works, and I understand that the third party has decided they want to use all the procedural wranglings and processes to hold up this bill. Whether they accept it or not, by using procedural hargues and holding up this bill, the only thing they truly are accomplishing is keeping the kids in Toronto and Windsor out of the classroom and that, to me, seems unacceptable in today's Ontario.

I hear some cackling from the third party and I find it passing strange to hear this cackling, because I sat in opposition to this third party, and the beauty of having sat in opposition to the third party is that each member who sits over there—of but nine—was part of the administration headed by Mr Bob Rae from 1990 to 1995, and some of them held very influential cabinet positions in that government. When they were faced with the exact same situation, they acted accordingly, which is what we've done, in a very similar way, to order people back to work.

I might add that during that administration they were faced with situations where jeopardy wasn't even declared on certain teaching unions. They acted before the jeopardy situation was put into place, so they're claiming a moral compass on this issue. But I can only suggest to those people in the third party that it seems you find your moral compass when you have no power to legislate the outcome. When you have legislative authority, you don't seem to have any moral compass. It seems rather convenient of you to find your conscience when it seems most appropriate for you to find your conscience.

1340

I find it somewhat frustrating, because in this situation when the third party was in power, their House leader came to our House leader and asked for co-operation—and I look to the member for Mississauga South, who was in the House at the time—to send teachers back to school in certain boards so the kids could get back in the classroom. They got nothing but absolute co-operation from our caucus, because at some times when we're in this place you have to allow the partisan nature of give and take to be overcome by certain realities. Those realities are that kids going to school and losing their year are important things that should not be subject to partisan bickering.

The absolute shame of it is this: had we not had a third party that was truly asleep at the switch, if we didn't have

a third party that hadn't bungled their procedural approach yesterday, we wouldn't even be here today taking the action necessary to get kids back in the classroom; we would be having to deal with section 69(c) applications from the third party that would keep them out of the classroom for two additional weeks, and it is absolutely unacceptable and shameful that they would take that position.

They argue that they take that position for the collective bargaining process and the unions. The point that has to be made is, why now have you found this "principled" approach to dealing with collective agreements? From 1990 to 1995 you never did anything like you're doing now when it came to ordering teachers back to work. Tell me about that. Square that circle for this House, square that circle for the people of the province. When you have the levers of power you make one decision, and when you're in the opposition you make an entirely opposite decision. Square that circle with the people of Ontario.

If there was some sense of glee in this caucus yesterday, it's understandable. If there's some sense of glee, it's acceptable.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** What's glee?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** "Glee" is a tough word, but I'll send over a definition, perhaps. If there's some sense of glee in this caucus, you're right, because we believe it's important to act today and we are prepared to sit for as long as it takes. I say to my caucus friends that under the standing orders, the procedural rules we live by, this third party can hold this House up for nine or 10 or some 11 hours. But I will tell that third caucus that, come the second reading vote and the third reading vote, you will find enough caucus members sitting on this side of the House to pass this kind of good legislation for the parents and children of Windsor and Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I listened intently to the minister across the way try to talk about why this legislation is necessary.

The reality here is that we know the parties in this particular case, in the board in Toronto and in Windsor, are trying to negotiate a settlement. What we have is a Minister of Labour, along with the entire government caucus, saying, "Listen, we know best. We can insert ourselves into the bargaining process and try to find some kind of resolution by forcing this type of legislation through the House," and there has been no jeopardy found, never mind that you've changed the legislation on how we define jeopardy in Ontario. In the case of the board in Toronto, they've been out on strike for some time now, but the schools have been closed merely a week. We know they're still negotiating. We know they're close to an agreement. So why would the Minister of Labour, knowing that the parties are close to getting a settlement in Toronto, want to force this type of process through? At the end of the day, all you're doing is kiboshing the process, by which you may end up forcing the board away from the table.



If you're successful in passing your legislation to force the parties back into a collective agreement, you still haven't dealt with the problem, because we know what the real problem is: it's your funding formula. It's your government who put your hands into the pockets of the taxpayers of the province of Ontario to take money out to make sure that the boards were reduced by almost \$1 billion in funding since you have come to power.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** A billion and a half.

**Mr Bisson:** A billion and a half, I'm told by our education critic.

Now, these boards are trying to find a way to operate, including, yes, keeping the schools clean, now that you took a billion and a half out of the school boards. So you've created this crisis. Don't come in here and start preaching to us about the moral high ground, because, sir, what you have done is nothing but low ground when it comes to the funding formula here in Ontario.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** First of all, I want to congratulate my colleague the Minister of Labour. He, in my opinion and in the opinion of the rest of cabinet, which had this very difficult decision to make in the beginning, and all of caucus in the end, has been very cautious in terms of letting the natural course of progress be made, with every opportunity, before we were forced to bring in this legislation.

There comes a point where the disruption in the lives of those families with children in elementary and secondary schools has to come to a stop, the disruption that affects their ability to earn their living, because if they're elementary-aged students, somebody has to be at home with those families. The disruption is incredible.

What I really need to tell you is that when I came into this building this afternoon, I came in at the same time as a visitor with a pass to our public galleries. It's such a beautiful day. I said, "Good afternoon. Isn't it a great day out there." He said, "Yes, and it'll be a great day in here when this legislation is passed." I said to him, "Are you a parent? Is that your interest?" The fact that someone is interested in being here I found very creditable for this individual.

He said, "I'm not here as a parent. I'm here because it's time for this legislation. I happen to be a caretaker in one of our schools." I commend him for saying that our government is doing the right thing, regardless of whether our New Democratic colleagues in opposition understand. The people who matter do understand.

**Mr Colle:** I know that the government party finds this to be a time for glee. I tell you, the people certainly in my riding find this a really sad period of time, because many of them are frankly fed up. They don't care whether it's the school board or whether it's us here or the government; they are basically fed up to their eyeballs with constant disruptions of their families' lives and the lives of their kids. This is a repeat of the same type of disruption we've had in our public schools for the last five years, over and over again. There's always an excuse, there's always someone else to blame. They are

frankly saying, "A pox on all your houses. If you can't run our basic schools and our basic hospitals, what are you doing there?"

They say they pay through the nose in property taxation for public schools. They volunteer. Their kids are going through one change after another—new curriculum. The teachers are going through their own version of hell. They say, "Who really cares about us?"

Yes, this legislation is supported by our caucus, but we're not happy with the fact that we're in this condition, because this condition is not just the fault of the workers who are on strike or the school board or the third party; a lot of it lies at the feet of this government.

1350

I especially feel sorry for the families of children with special needs in Toronto, 26,000 of them, who have been told to stay home. They haven't been at school for four weeks, and their families and these children have suffered. I hope the government puts money back so there will be remedial teaching and tutoring for these special-needs kids—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Colle:** Yes, money for special-needs kids. You don't care about special-needs kids. All you care about is—

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm afraid the member's time is up.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Last warning to the member for Eglinton-Lawrence. His time is up.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I find it passing strange that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Take your seat. Put the clock back two minutes.

I know we're dealing with education issues, but when you start yelling across about who started what, quite frankly, you sound like a couple of kids in elementary school. We're not going to put up with that. Stop the yelling back and forth. I don't care whose fault it is or who started it, if you yell across like that, we're not going to be able to continue.

We'll put the clock back two minutes for the member for Sault Ste Marie.

**Mr Martin:** I find it passing strange that this government, which has wreaked so much havoc on the public life of this province, has us here this afternoon talking about legislation that probably wouldn't be needed in the first place had they not decided two years ago to target the organized labour movement in this province, instead of looking at them as the assets that they are, bringing them to the table around issues of concern to all of the people of the province and working out arrangements that are satisfactory to everybody concerned.

It's an interesting axiom in this world that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Sorry for the interruption.

Again, if you want to have these discussions across like that, it's a wide space and if you talk loud enough for

the other person to hear, we can't hear anybody else. We have two lobbies on either side. If you want to decide what schools you're going to visit together, then kindly take it out to either of the lobbies and discuss it. Don't yell across the floor here. Or, as often happens, one of you go across to the other side and sit face to face two feet away. Then I can hear. But don't yell across, especially when I've called for order a couple of times.

Sorry again for the interruption, member for Sault Ste Marie.

**Mr Martin:** I think the people out there should know that the little debate going on here this afternoon is primarily between the governing party and the Liberals. We on this side, the third party, wanted to have a serious discussion about this, a very serious issue that affects the lives of the people of this province and the people of Toronto.

It's an interesting axiom that in this world, in my experience so far—and I've lived about 52 years—what goes around comes around.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Martin:** On a point of order: I would ask the member to withdraw that comment.

**The Speaker:** We'll stop the clock quickly. I didn't hear anything. I was listening intently to the member's comments. If any member has said it and they wish to rise, they are certainly free to do it. I didn't hear it. As I mentioned, I was listening very intently.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** OK. Thank you for your gracious gesture.

The member for Sault Ste Marie.

**Mr Martin:** I was of the understanding that this is a very serious issue to the folks across the way. It seems to me, from what we've seen in the very short time we've had now, that it really isn't. It's a matter of ridicule and joking and laughing.

You created the turmoil in almost every area of public life in this province. Then when the turmoil happens and you can't control it, because you have no relationship with the partners to the turmoil, your immediate response is knee-jerk legislation. You bring it in here, you time-allocate it and you drive it through. We won't stand for that.

**Mr O'Toole:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I'm questioning the member who has just spoken here. If the House should permit him to speak, given that he insulted the very standing orders of this House—

**The Speaker:** Order. Would the member take his seat. Order. You've done your apologies. It's the Minister of Labour's turn.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I appreciate the comments from the members opposite. There's no glee here. I don't know where the member for the Liberal Party got "glee."

*Interjection:* You said it.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Listen for a moment. We were gleeful that they were asleep at the switch. That's what I said in my speech, so think it through before you start

flapping. I said we were gleeful because the kids would benefit because they were asleep at the switch and they're going to be back at school sooner. That's what we were gleeful about.

As far as the opposition parties are concerned, the member for Timmins-James Bay, I think, says we didn't wait for jeopardy. You know, that's the problem in dealing with this House, because you have to deal with people who have no understanding of how the system works. There is no jeopardy for support workers. There is no jeopardy. The ERC doesn't rule jeopardy on support workers.

**Mr Bisson:** That's the point.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** The point is you told us we didn't wait for jeopardy. We would have waited until the cows came home. There isn't a jeopardy equation from the ERC for heaven's sake. God forbid they be in government. They'd be waiting for a jeopardy rule on support workers and there is nobody who declares jeopardy.

Honest to goodness, you want to talk about the moral high ground and you stand there talking about the collective bargaining process. You should be ashamed of yourself. What about the social contract? And the Rae days? Where was your moral compass then? Where was the sanctity of collective agreements? You only have sanctity for a collective agreement when you have no decision-making powers. When you've got the levers of power in your hand, your moral compass is gone. Out. You've got Rae days and social contracts.

Lecturing us on collective bargaining processes—we waited. We wanted a deal. Four, five, six weeks, they didn't get one. You have to show some leadership. You have to stand up and be counted. You've got to get the kids back to school. You don't need to lecture me on the social contract and the sanctity of collective agreements. We're here all night. They're going back Monday.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** At the pleasure of the House, I'll split my time with the members for Windsor West, Windsor-St Clair, Sarnia-Lambton and also Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

Now, I'm just going to wait a second and let the waves of sanctimoniousness pass through from the other side of the House about how they would like to cover themselves in glory for the conditions of the schools in Toronto and Windsor, and elsewhere in the province today. To hear from the Minister of Labour, who has idly stood by, who has condoned and recommended the kind of cuts and conditions that have prevailed on the students with whom he's charged in this Toronto system, is more than anyone on this side is going to take.

Today we're talking principally about this legislation, but this legislation was borne in the neglect and the commission of this government. We're supporting, reluctantly, legislation that is the only option that this government knows how to consider. They only know how to use the hammer. They had in front of them all of this House, including the members from the third party, who couldn't find a constructive solution to save their lives, apparently. What the people on the picket lines and the stu-



dents in the schools—and more importantly, the students lately not in schools—needed from all of us in this House were some constructive solutions. We have no business having to only resort to hammers because nobody on the government side, and apparently elsewhere in the third party, can find a way—

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. The member for Peterborough.

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I take exception to the member who suggested there was doublespeak in my world. That kind of sounds a bit like telling a lie and I take offence to it. I would—

**The Speaker:** Member, take a seat. I can see where both myself and the table are going to listen very carefully, and I say to the table if I hear any out-of-order language, I'm going to jump on it very quickly.

As I said to one of the members who just went out, I'm glad we don't sit too often on Fridays because obviously the mood in here changes. I know we have a very controversial issue. I'm going to be in the chair most of the time and I'm telling each and every side, right here, right now, if you start with the bad language in here I'm going to clamp down on it. So for everybody in here, we're going to listen carefully. The people at the table are going to listen carefully. They're going to give me a signal if they hear it and I'm going to be up on my feet very quickly.

The member for Parkdale-High Park.

1400

**Mr Kennedy:** There's no place for any member of this House to hide today behind the interests of children or the interests of the workers out there who may not get a fair deal as a result of this particular resolution today. There is no place. I'm sorry, but this House has become incapable of considering solutions that could actually bring the interests of parties together. We had that responsibility. Why did we have that responsibility specifically in this case? We did because this House, this government, took \$1,800 away from each and every student in the city of Toronto in one of the boards in question and \$1,100 away from each and every student in the city of Windsor in the Catholic board. That's what the members opposite are condoning.

Less than 4% of those savings came from administration. Where did it come from? It came from the exact category that we're now debating. It's so vital that we've got to order them back to work. It came from the people who were so-called outside the classroom. It came from the janitors, it came from the support workers, it came from those people whom you have, all your time in government across the way, called down as less needed and less useful.

This is the result: intractable, sometimes senseless in a way, disputes taking place because the party that needs to be there won't even in a constructive way put themselves at the table except to put their thumb on the scale to make sure things don't balance out.

They did that in three ways, which we asked the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour to consider, to put forward a constructive bill that would at least allow a mediator to decide what would be fair rather than the conditions imposed by this government, the conditions that they wanted to have considered, which were fruitlessly unsuccessful in the last number of weeks in giving either side the ability to come to an agreement.

What were those? The absence of money. They don't want to talk about resources. The Premier the other day sat in front of an audience and said nothing about this government's commitment to improve education, not one dime, not one new idea, nothing that would actually advance the interests of children. That's what people need to hear today. So we're saying that ability for the province to recognize the role it took on to fund all education should have been at that negotiating table in both cities.

As well, the government has changed the way the negotiating process works, has made sure that only the narrowest of considerations can be undertaken by arbitrators. We're saying allow that to change, allow flexibility, allow something that's sustainable, not just for one year but on an ongoing basis. How hard would that have been? How hard would that have been to make that possible?

There was also a need on the part of this government to say to these boards and to say to the federations involved—the unions, in this case—that there was an interest in becoming the referee again, that there was a willingness to take up intractable issues that could be refereed by the province or referenced to the province. At no time did the province express that. Their rules are their rules, their rigidity is their rigidity, and in that, they turned down the possibility we put forward for a goodwill resolution.

Why does that matter now more than ever? Because goodwill is in short supply in this school system. As much as we believe that the rights of children to go to school have now superseded the collective bargaining interests, which we do support—we're not the authors of the social contract, which this party also voted for. We simply would like to see that work in a way that can be made to work.

We see a greater danger. We see a government attacking public education, using the turmoil that they have helped to create in public education to undermine it. I would ask the members opposite to stand up and acknowledge and defend their role in creating the situation that we now have to contend with today where the parties couldn't come to an agreement in their interests and the interests of the kids that everyone here wants to hide behind.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** I have a few minutes available to me. I want to first of all address this immediate question of the Minister of Labour's actions with reference specifically to my home, which is Windsor. I should declare at the outset that I have a direct interest in this. My little boy has been affected by this

strike for five weeks now. In fact, I spent the first three weeks doing my work as an MPP and also looking after a number of the kids in the neighbourhood. So I've felt the effect of this very personally.

Let me say to the Minister of Labour, first of all, I have been in regular contact with both sides in the dispute in Windsor. I've satisfied myself that there was no local resolution that was going to come forward. The amount of time that this community has been on strike—and the kids have been rotated in and out over the last few weeks. We're now at the end of our fifth week.

The government has quite correctly noted that there is no way of finding jeopardy. So I attempted to use other declarations of jeopardy as approximations to when it would have been appropriate to do what the government has done. I think one thing we need to keep in mind is that the curriculum today is more difficult than it has been in the past. Accordingly, each day, in my view, represented a longer period of time. It is, in my view, the appropriate time to take this step in Windsor.

I also want to say to the government that I am aware of Mr Steve Raymond, and I want to be unequivocal that I believe he will be a neutral arbitrator and is appropriate. I'm not familiar with the arbitrator in the Windsor situation and I can't comment on that. I can tell you this: the folks in my community believe this is the appropriate step.

The last time, interestingly enough, that back-to-work legislation was brought in, it was brought in by the New Democratic Party, in their mandate. It involved a teachers' strike. At that time they passed the legislation before jeopardy was found. I believe it's in the interest of the kids in my community and I believe it's in the interest of families. Families are struggling when their kids are at home. First, the kids are getting very bored right now, I can tell you that. I spend a lot of time with them. They're getting bored. It's hard to keep kids interested when they're not in school. Second, it's a rough curriculum. My fifth grader does an hour and a half of homework every night, and he has to, as do his friends, to keep up.

I believe the collective bargaining situation in Windsor could not have found a solution to this problem, and accordingly I'm voting in favour of this legislation. My colleagues in Toronto believe the same situation exists in Toronto.

There is a broader question about education. In my case, in the case of the Windsor board, funding has gone down an average of \$1,100 per student. There will be a big debate on that question at the appropriate time. We don't want the kids to be held hostage to this. In fact, as soon as this is done, that same board has to vote on closing yet another seven schools in my community. I want to get back to debating those issues with the government, because we are fundamentally opposed to your agenda in education. We believe fundamentally that your agenda for education is setting this province back, not moving it forward. But that debate ought to occur with the kids in school, and it ought to occur in the context of this Legislature, and candidly and frankly, in the context

of a general election. It's important to get our kids back to school.

In the case of Windsor, I've satisfied myself. I've been in touch with the union and I've been in touch with the board on a regular basis. There is no local solution to be found in the Windsor situation. The arbitrator in the Toronto situation I know to be a very good arbitrator. I don't have a problem. I'm glad there's an additional seven days in the legislation to find a solution locally. But it is essential to get the kids back to school.

I'm looking forward to the debate on education, but I want our kids in Windsor back in school. With the kids in school, we can have that debate; we can have it here, we can have it in our communities. I look forward to having that debate in the next general election, because in my view it is your policies, the policies of the Harris government, that have led to the chaos in this system. With the kids in school, we can debate that, and in my view that's the appropriate way to debate it.

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I want to make it very clear that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus believe that the best place for students is in the classroom. We know that. The discussion about good education must begin with stability and peace in our schools, none of which the Harris government wants to achieve. All we've had is six years of turmoil in the schools.

I make no bones about my own evaluation, and that is that the responsibility for that constant turmoil in our education system and the demoralization of our educators rests solely on the shoulders of the Harris government. We are now in a lockout in Sarnia-Lambton as well. Where there was no issue before, such as extracurricular, the Harris Tories decided to create a problem. We didn't have a problem in extracurricular in most of the school boards across this province, but no, we have to use the hammer because that's the only tool they know how to use. Therefore, we now have a problem with extracurricular.

Good business practices mean there has to be a good relationship with the employees. This government does not understand good management, in my view, from what we see.

From 1995 to 2001, the province has cut support for students. I believe it's almost \$1,700 less per student in Toronto and about \$1,146 less per student in Windsor. I find that incredible when you've more than doubled the administrative, the running of the Tory offices, your cabinet offices. You've doubled your administrative offices for the Premier. Yesterday I heard Ms Ecker, the Minister of Education, saying, "The boards have to stay within their budgets."

**1410**

Not at all. Not the Tory cabinet offices. You can more than double them. Why? I couldn't get an answer from the Deputy Premier, no answer at all. That's OK, because the Tories have one rule for themselves and one rule for the rest of the province. As I said, we believe that the kids should be in school. It's important that they're in



school. But the only way we're going to stop this turmoil is by getting rid of the Tories.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** I think the last comment made it hard for the ones opposite to clap.

I don't need a lot of time, Mr Speaker, to lay out the principle on which I come to the conclusion that supporting this legislation is both important and appropriate. I do so on the basis of one thing, and it's kids. It's kids not unlike those who grace our galleries with their presence today, who in my riding are being prevented from being with teachers, at the end of the road to class in the morning, who are willing to teach them.

The government opposite has already in this debate used words like "glee" and "congratulations." I think both of those words are inappropriate in the context of this debate. I don't think this is a proud day in the history of this place. It is one I will remember, but it is not one that I will cherish.

I support this legislation. The third party talks about the principle involved, that this is, in a sense a capitulation, that it helps to mirror or mask the reality behind the disarray in our education system today in Ontario. I understand that argument and I think there's much to be said for it. But the compelling messages I've heard are from the people I represent: the kids at Jarvis Collegiate in their OAC year, who have, for their entire high school careers, known nothing but disruption, who have been prevented from fulfilling the full extent of their high school careers by a system that does not properly work for them. It is with them in mind that I decide that it's appropriate to offer support for this legislation. It gets kids back in the classroom with teachers who are willing to help them learn.

Many of the constituents that I'm honoured to represent, many of those kids, don't have the benefit of parents who are as able to help them with their homework as others. A lot of English-as-a-second-language parents are not as able as we would like to assist those kids. Those kids need to be in a classroom. I'd say that this disarray in our public education system is an issue that we are concerned about and we look forward to that debate.

I believe the government's agenda is designed to undermine our public education system. The Common Sense Revolution has been brought home to too many of the households in my riding, and this disarray in the public education system is one example of that. I think it's a sad note that on a day when we're having this debate, which is brought about in large measure by an absence of adequate funding, especially in urban school boards, in the city of Toronto, because of dramatic increases in their property values, taxpayers will see an additional tax bill of \$77 million, not one penny of which will be spent in Toronto to deal with the funding inadequacies that come about and that have brought about in part this labour impasse that we are dealing with today. That \$77 million, instead of being available to deal with these challenges locally, will be sent to other places.

I stand on principle, and I'll vote in support of this legislation on the principle that kids can be back in the classrooms sooner. That's the most important principle that is at stake, in my opinion.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? Seeing none, questions and comments?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** I have to say to the speakers on behalf of the Liberal caucus that I do find it amazing, the way in which you want to have it both ways all the time on such important public policy issues. The fact that you can stand and rail against the government and what they're doing in the education system and yet not only facilitate quick passage of a draconian piece of legislation but vote in favour of it totally amazes me, except that I've come to know that to be the Liberal Party of Ontario.

I read this legislation, someone who has spent time working in the area of negotiations and understanding how the role of compulsory arbitration is meant to replace free collective bargaining and the results of free collective bargaining, and I understand when I read the way in which the government's funding formula is imposed on the arbitrator and the arbitrator's decision-making that the workers who have been on the picket lines for the last three weeks cannot get a fair deal. Whether you think the arbitrator is benign or not, the rules that the arbitrator is fettered by will screw the workers who have been out on those lines.

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. We're not going to start with language like that. I ask the member to withdraw—we're not going to use words like that—and then she may continue.

**Ms Lankin:** I absolutely do, Mr Speaker. I feel passionately that this legislation is legislation that is designed to oppress those workers who are fighting for a fair deal and a fair process. The Liberal Party is facilitating that and voting for that and yet speaking against it in their speeches.

The Liberal Party, when the government passed their motion to sit today, not only was with the government, they cheered and applauded the government's achievement. I believe that we want our children back in school. We want them in a school where they can get a good-quality education, with workers who are compensated and are treated with respect, without a poisoned atmosphere. This bill does not accomplish that.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** A couple of points that I think are worth mentioning: The member for Parkdale-High Park, the Liberal critic, was talking about people hiding behind or playing politics, disputes in classrooms. There have always been fights and disputes and disagreements in the education sector, for years, under Liberal governments, under NDP governments, under previous Tory governments, because education is extremely important to everyone and people have strong views.

The difference is that those disputes do not have to be taken into the classroom, that those disputes should not be taken into the classroom and taking education away

from our kids. So all sides of the House want a fair agreement, want a collective agreement for those members, those unionized workers, of course we do. But also, at the same time, we have to keep in mind that there are children who are sitting there waiting to go back to school, there are parents whose lives are being seriously disrupted by this strike. Quite frankly, enough is enough. So that's why we have moved to bring in legislation that will ensure that the children are back in school.

The Liberal Party, with all due respect, brought in a bill yesterday that they thought would be of assistance. While everyone appreciates someone trying to help, you can't say, "Let's solve it by saying, 'Let's have a mediator, let's let them all have a mediator.'" They've had that option. The Ministry of Labour has been there to support both parties, both in Windsor and in Toronto, but those options have not been used by the board or the union.

With all due respect to the Liberal Party, passing a bill saying, "Gee, let's all sit down and be nice together," is not going to solve it. This legislation is going to solve this dispute, and for the sake of the kids, to have them back in the classroom, it's a necessary step that we feel we have to take.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** The Minister of Education just indicated that this is just another dispute, not unlike all sorts of other ones. My judgment, Minister, is that the education system is in serious difficulty. I believe that. If you don't believe that, then you probably don't understand what's happening out there.

Ken Dryden, a thoughtful Ontarian who has looked often at our education system, had some good advice for us today: "It's time to bring some peace into our schools."

You hear comments about public education. The best time in my life perhaps was high school. I had my 40th reunion of a football team. All three of my coaches from 40 years ago were at it. They remembered every single thing about us. I can still remember my French teacher, my English teacher, dare I say the principal, the vice-principals, virtually all the teachers there at London Central.

1420

The teachers today are the same as they were 40 years ago. I have spent a lot of time in schools. But we have turmoil in our schools. Even more important, the support for public education is bound to lessen, because no one can view all of this turmoil and not begin to lose confidence.

Again, we heard a lot of rhetoric in the House today. The best solution to this particular trouble we're in right now, I happen to believe, is the legislation before us. We can have a difference of opinion, but I would say to all of us: I am strongly of the opinion that we are doing serious damage to public education right now, and we need to address it instantly.

**Mr Marchese:** Speaker, we rail against this Conservative government that has done many things that are evil,

I tell you, in the education system. The first one is that they have assaulted the teaching profession in a way that has poisoned the work environment, in a way that has affected the quality of education in the classroom, in a way that has affected the students and their ability to learn, and I rail against this government for bringing back-to-work legislation that further poisons the environment for those non-teaching personnel.

My rail, however, at this moment—because I'll have plenty of time to attack the Tories—is against the Liberals. The Liberals say, through Mr Kennedy, "The NDP could not find a constructive solution—too bad, so sad." What's their solution? To support the government in sending the workers back. You Liberals cannot have it every which way. I know that you are chameleons. I know how you slither under the carpet, in between the carpets. I know how reptilian you can be, and we're going to expose you to the public, because snakes can only go so far until they get caught by the general public. They're bad, but you are worse. You have no guts whatsoever. They have the guts to do the bad thing, and you have no guts in standing up for the very things that you argue about: how the underfunding is a problem, how those poor workers are not getting a fair deal. What do you do? Ecker comes in with Stockwell to force these people back, and you say, "OK, no problem."

Yes, they cheered gleefully when a couple of us here were caught off guard and they said, "Ha, wonderful." They cheered you on. Whose side are you on, you reptilian MPPs?

**The Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Kennedy:** Unfortunately, I think people, including some of the kids in the gallery today, are getting a lesson in the incapacity of this House to do better than what we have in front of us today, that there isn't an ability to look at and have a regard for real solutions.

With all respect to the minister, what we said was, if you were able to make it more attractive, people would voluntarily have gone into mediation. They would have done that. If this party over here had decided that instead of some kind of play they would be willing to assist a solution, they could have got behind that. There could have been some force to see better things done, to see that the mediation would work, to see that other things were done.

In the interests of children, yes, but the parties in this House, including our own, have to make choices between competing goods, in this case the collective bargaining rights of the workers and the ability of children to gain an education. We don't take any pleasure in the choice between them, and we don't pretend to have it all ways or, frankly, any way in this particular case.

We do want to appeal to the province at large and to the members of this House for better disposition of things that are happening in education. The days coming are a test of every member in this House as to whether, beyond their partisan and ideological constraints, they really do care about public education, or are the members opposite



just waiting to shop this in pieces to some private companies? Are these members here unable to find answers?

This is the third time we've put together constructive things. We asked each member of this House to go back to school, to spend time. I will gladly name members in every party who did that, but many have not. We also said we could get extracurricular back in operation in the 75% of all public schools where it's vastly diminished if the members opposite would just find their way to have their way and not hurt the kids, and compromise with the teachers of this province to make that work. They refused to do that and they refused again yesterday, when we put our other back-to-school plan on the table.

We hope for better. We will fight for better.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Let me begin by saying that it sounds to me that more than a few people were betting on New Jersey last night, by the sounds of comments here today.

I'm happy to say that I want to address what I think are the real issues in this dispute, and I also think they are the real issues in education across the province. However, before I do that, I just want to point out something the Minister of Labour said.

He said that the NDP did order teachers back to work. That's true. In one case, in November 1993 in Lambton, there was a finding of jeopardy, and after the finding of jeopardy, legislation was passed. I'm pleased to say it resulted in a collective agreement and generally both sides were happy with that collective agreement. Then, as I understand, in Parry Sound later on that year, in October 1993, there was a finding of jeopardy and legislation was passed which resulted again in an arbitrated collective agreement. In December 1993 there was a strike, a labour dispute in Windsor. Just so that the Minister of Labour is aware of this, yes, legislation was passed, the legislation was proclaimed, but it was never implemented because in the meantime the parties were able to get together and negotiate a collective agreement. So in two of the cases there was jeopardy and in the third case the parties were able to negotiate a collective agreement before a finding of jeopardy and before the implementation of the collective agreement—just to set the Minister of Labour straight.

I said I wanted to get to the real issues. What's happening in Toronto and Windsor and what has been happening in North Bay are only symptomatic of what has already happened with a number of other boards of education across the province and what is going to happen with a number of further boards as we move into this year. The problem is this: it is true, and any accounting will show it, that a billion and a half dollars have been removed from school budgets across the province. Schools in Ontario are operating now with one and a half billion dollars less in terms of operating funding than they had in 1995. The government has done this in a number of ways. The point is that because one and a half billion dollars have been removed from school budgets, schools are continually pressed against the wall in terms of trying to find the money to finance caretaking,

the duties of the secretary and maintenance and custodial staff. In many cases they don't have the money for bus-ing, in some cases they don't have the money for special education, in other cases they don't have the money for libraries and the list continues. Depending upon where you are in Ontario, different boards are facing different but difficult circumstances because the government has taken so much money out of the education envelope.

Just some big figures so that we get a sense of the overall context: in 1998, after these cuts were first implemented, Ontario ranked 55th in North America in terms of educational funding for elementary and secondary schools. We used to at one time look down at the Americans and say that they didn't value education enough. In 1998 the American average in funding was \$7,254 per pupil, versus Ontario at \$4,709 per pupil. Those American states that not so many years ago we used to look at and say, "Oh, they don't value education," are now investing far more than Ontario is in their young people and in their students. The Ontario alternative budget calculated that in order to restore Ontario to its 1994-95 ranking, funding would have to be increased by \$1,000 per pupil.

1430

In terms of what's happening out there in schools, over 138 schools have closed or are slated to close in the next two years. Ten per cent fewer elementary schools have full-time principals. Think about that. The principal is the person whom parents and the community and teachers and the board, and the students most of all, rely upon to provide direction for the school, to ensure that overall management of the school is appropriate and to ensure there is responsiveness to parents and to students. We have all kinds of schools now in Ontario which have no principal.

Forty two per cent of elementary classes have 26 or more students. What's important about that? The government said in its legislation that this shouldn't happen. But in fact we have all kinds of elementary classrooms across Ontario now that have more students in them than the government has said in its public statements should ever be the case.

Class sizes have been increasing since 1995. For grade 2 students—imagine this—who are trying to master reading and literacy, who are trying to come to grips with mathematical concepts, who are having to deal with all kinds of social challenges as well, class sizes have increased by more than 10%. When you start thinking about students, individual children, it means you have three or four or five children in the class who are not getting the attention they need. That's what it means.

Twenty-four per cent fewer elementary schools have English-as-a-second-language programs. Why is that important? Because everything we see tells us that more and more Ontario is becoming a multicultural society. That is particularly true in cities like Ottawa, and not just Toronto but the greater Toronto area, Hamilton, London, Windsor. Almost all of the major urban areas of this province are becoming very multicultural, and there is a

need for English as a second language if students are to do well. Yet this government is wiping out ESL programs across the province.

Parents may not understand how this government allocates funding for schools. You might think they allocate funding on a per student basis, but in fact that's not the case. This government allocates funding to school boards on a per foot basis—not per student but per foot of school space. Even in that, they didn't match the funding that their own advisory panel told them they needed. They said, "If you're going to do this on a per foot basis, if you're going to go around and measure each school and then fund it on a per foot basis, you should fund on the basis of \$5.50 per foot." Even by their own standards, the government is underfunding at \$5.20 per foot.

But the whole idea of per foot is a fallacy, because we have a lot of older schools that may have wasted space or that may have space that is not being used now as it would have been in the past. So in effect, the funding on a per foot basis doesn't recognize the needs of students; it doesn't recognize the special circumstances of students; frankly, it's based upon something that is really quite irrelevant in terms of students in our schools today.

Some anecdotal evidence around the province—and I would say that what we're seeing in Toronto and what we're seeing in Windsor is not unique. Go to Hamilton. A survey was done in Hamilton by the teachers, students and board staff about how people felt about the cleanliness of the schools. They all reported that the schools in Hamilton were not sufficiently and appropriately clean for students to be there every day, but they don't have the money in the funding formula to do anything about it. So they addressed the government and said, "Would you deal with this issue." The government said, "No, we're not interested in this issue. If your schools aren't clean, that's your problem." Well, it's all our problem, and this government has to recognize that it is its problem.

On February 5 the Ontario Public School Trustees' Association wrote to the Minister of Education warning her of the funding crisis that boards are facing because of increased fuel costs. Everybody across Ontario knows that the cost of natural gas and heating fuel has risen dramatically in the last year. In fact, there are many people across the province who are saying, "I'm having a hard time paying my heating bill." So the trustees' association wrote to the government and said, "There is not enough money in the funding formula to pay for something as essential as heating our schools," and they asked the Minister of Education to recognize this need.

In Toronto alone the heating costs increased by \$17 million over the last year. Did the government come up with \$17 million to help with something as essential as the heating costs? No. They recognized a small portion of it and said to the schools and the boards of education, "Take the rest from somewhere else."

I said earlier that depending on where you are in the province, this problem is cropping up. Let me tell you what it's like in northern Ontario. Almost all schools in northern Ontario have situations where they have to bus

their students. In some cases they may have to bus their students 40, 50, 60 or 70 kilometres. Many northern school boards don't have sufficient money to bus their students.

Routinely, as an MPP or a school trustee, you receive letters and phone calls from parents who are saying, "My child is only in grade 1, only in grade 2. It's often 30 or 40 degrees below outside in the winter, but my child is having to walk this distance to school at these temperatures and I think this is unsafe." The board has to write back and say, "I'm sorry. We recognize the safety issue. We recognize it's not a good idea to have a seven-year-old walking this distance on a road that may not have many people going up and down it, on a road that may have logging trucks going up and down it at high speed. We recognize there is a safety issue here, but we don't have the money in the funding formula and the provincial government doesn't recognize this as a serious issue. They will not address it and they will not help us address it."

Textbooks: go into any of our schools and see the sorry situation with respect to textbooks. The funding formula allocates \$100 per year for textbooks, computer software and library materials, but a high school student taking a full course load—my nephew, taking a full course load—requires more than \$400 in texts and learning materials. So there's \$300 per student right there that this government refuses to fund.

Again, depending where you are in the province, this inadequacy of the funding formula expresses itself in different ways, but it's happening everywhere.

More than 65% of elementary schools report that students are now using worn, out-of-date textbooks, or they must share textbooks. How do you share textbooks in a rural school where one student lives 40 kilometres this side of the school and the other student lives 40 kilometres in the other direction? It simply can't happen. So what you have are situations where neither student who is supposed to be sharing the same textbook receives any justice out of the funding formula.

Then there's the very sad case of special education. Some 34,000 children in elementary schools alone are waiting for special education services, 34,000 children who need help, and this government says, "Sorry, you're not important enough. There's no money in the funding formula for that."

I want people to know what it's like in the more remote parts of Ontario. To get special education funding for your students, your child has to go through a number of hoops put in place by this government. You have to go through a number of tests. The problem is, if you live in a rural part of Ontario, you won't have the psychologist, the psychometrist and all the specialists at hand in order to do these tests. You actually have to fly someone into the community from Toronto, Ottawa or Hamilton. You have to pay for their expenses for a week in order to have these tests done. The boards of education are saying, "We don't have that money. We know that by any measure



these students deserve special education, but we can't afford to have the tests done."

There are 34,000 children in Ontario now who are in that situation, and all the government has to offer is more standardized tests, which will tell you that these students aren't performing at the level they should be. Of course they aren't. If they can't get the special education services they need, they likely never will perform at an adequate level. More standardized tests are not going to help them. A funding formula with special education dollars would help them. But again, what's the answer of the government? The government prefers tax cuts to the well-off more than they prefer to address these problems.

1440

The government says they're now spending \$1.4 billion on special education. They say it's the most that has ever been invested in special education in the province. Let me tell you how they get at that sleight of hand. They look at what the Ministry of Education used to put into special education back in 1994, and they won't consider the money that the boards used to put in on top of that to top it up. This government says, "That money that the boards used to put in, that doesn't matter." In fact, if you looked at the money the boards put in on top of the money the province put in, again that's where you find the underfunding of special education today. This government has cut it. The children who need help the most, this government has cut them. This problem is showing its ugly, awful face across the province.

Just to give you again a description of what's happening, since 1997 there has been a 30% decrease in elementary school psychologists. When children need to be assessed, when they need that attention to discover if they have a learning difficulty, if they have some other issue that needs to be addressed, there's no psychologist there to do it.

Further, just to give you an idea, I mentioned busing. We have situations in northern and rural Ontario where students who need special education services are being forced to travel three hours by bus to get those special education services. Imagine, a seven-year-old, an eight-year-old, having to spend three hours on a bus because the local school doesn't have it in their budget to provide the special education services and the province says that's not important enough to address through the funding formula.

Then there's the issue of teacher cuts. People need to pay attention to what's happening. Under the Conservatives, there are about three or four teachers less per 1,000 students than we had in 1995. There is no provision in the funding formula for specialist teachers. This government considers specialist teachers to be non-classroom spending, not to be a priority. They forced the following cuts in elementary schools in terms of specialist teachers.

Last year, 44% had no music teacher. Educational experts and psychologists will tell you that music is important to young children. It is important in terms of the sort of wiring of the brain and the incremental steps in

learning that children must go through. But all kinds of children in this province no longer receive that music education, which is so essential to their personal and educational development.

Now 63% have no physical education teacher. Health report after health report says that we are more and more out of shape and less and less fit, and what is the province doing about it? They're taking the physical education teachers out of the elementary schools. Some 82% had no full-time librarian. At a time when literacy is more important than ever before, the government continues to take the librarians out of the schools, the very specialists who know how to address the reading needs of children, the very people who know how to get people excited about books. This government is doing away with them.

Then, for students who may not be university bound or college bound but who want to have a good technical background, a good technical level in high school, who want to go into design or technology, they're finding that there are 48% fewer teachers there as well.

Since 1995 enrolment in Ontario has actually increased by almost 60,000 students. So there are 60,000 more students, but there are 11,399 fewer teachers. That, again, describes the problem.

I won't go into the growing teacher shortage, I won't go into the exodus of teachers out of the province who are trying to get to other jurisdictions. But that is a huge problem that is going to get more and more serious over the next two or three years. That's what's happening.

The problem is being manifested differently depending upon where you are in the province. Here in Toronto it is manifested now by the board of education saying to its teachers, "We have signed a collective agreement with you after eight years without a pay increase. We've tried to give you a modest increase. If you look at it on an annual basis, you're still behind in terms of inflation and the cost of living. We signed a collective agreement." Then they come to the caretaking staff, who are essential, the custodians, the maintenance staff, the school secretaries who phone parents when their children are late for school or don't show up at school to make sure they know where the children are. The board has had to say, "Sorry, we know you haven't had a raise. We also know that you're very lowly paid. But we can't afford." Why? Because the money isn't in the funding formula.

The government's answer, as these issues break out, as these issues are created in one community after another across the province, is going to continue to blame the boards, blame the teachers, blame the staff, blame the community. Then the government's answer is going to be to bring forward legislation that is inadequate, legislation that in many ways will make the situation worse.

The Minister of Labour said, "Why are the New Democrats standing in the way of this legislation?" I want him to know why. We wanted to find time for the board and the union to negotiate, to find a collective agreement, because we know that the legislation the government has in mind would make the situation worse.

I have to tell you, my daughter would be affected. My daughter goes to an elementary school two blocks from here. My daughter is affected when they're not going to school now. But my daughter would also be affected and other children would be affected by this kind of legislation, which will wreak more havoc in our schools, create more bad working relationships in our schools. Children will be affected by that. By necessity, they'll be affected by that.

So we don't want to see a situation where the Minister of Labour could go out and appoint Stockwell Day as the arbitrator. That's what the legislation says. The legislation says the arbitrator doesn't have to have any experience in arbitration, doesn't have to have any knowledge about arbitration, doesn't have to be credible, doesn't have to have a reputation for being fair, doesn't have to have a reputation for being independent. Chris Stockwell, the Minister of Labour, could appoint Stockwell Day, he could appoint Mike Harris, he could appoint his chief political hack to be the arbitrator. That's wrong. It's wrong because it's going to create a more difficult working relationship, and it's wrong because it's going to create precedents in the school system that are simply going to create more and more difficulty down the road, and that will be bad for our children.

We wanted to find as much time as possible for the board and for the union to come to a collective agreement, to avoid this abominable, odious, ugly legislation, which will only make matters worse, which will only create more difficult working circumstances and which will only create all the wrong precedents, all the wrong directions in terms of working relationships in our schools.

1450

I'm hopeful that in the time that we allowed, the time we were able to create, that the board and the union—and we understand that they are still talking, that the board and the union met last night, they met earlier today, at least in the case of Toronto, and they are trying to find the ground for a collective agreement. Even though they acknowledge that the province refuses to put the money in the funding formula to deal with caretaking, refuses to put the money in the formula to deal with special education, refuses to put the money in the formula to deal with textbooks, refuses to put the money in the formula to deal with class size, they are still, under those very difficult circumstances that this government has created, trying to find a collective agreement. I think it is better for our schools and better for our children and better for their educational futures if we do that, rather than force on them legislation which can only negatively affect them and negatively affect the schools.

I only want the government members to know that our members feel very strongly about this legislation. I'll give the government 10 seconds of credit. We felt yesterday that we had put forward a procedural motion which would ensure that this legislation couldn't be debated until Monday. In that sense, we were, for about 10 seconds, a little overconfident. You caught us and you

slipped through your manoeuvre, which means that this legislation has to be debated here today. As I said yesterday, we acknowledge your nifty little move, but you'd understand our members, members of the New Democratic caucus, feel very, very strongly about this legislation and we're very much opposed to it and the impact that it will have on our children and our schools.

**Mr Marchese:** Only New Democrats.

**Mr Hampton:** Yes, in fact only New Democrats. One of the things that disturbed me was to watch members of the Liberal caucus yesterday. When the government accomplished their nifty move, Liberal members jumped to their feet and cheered with the Conservative government. I thought to myself, maybe the Liberals knew something about this move that the government was going to try, because they certainly seemed to be ready for it and certainly ready to cheer the government on.

What needs to happen in the instant situation? I think two things need to happen in the instant situation here in Toronto and the situation in Windsor. As I said, I hope the government comes to its senses and sets this legislation aside because of all the negative aspects to it, the negative repercussions. I hope that the government recognizes—and I want people across the province to understand this—since the disputes in Windsor and the disputes in Toronto happened, the government has been withholding the money for wages and salaries from the boards. This government has actually been making money off these labour disputes. This government has pocketed \$18 million that would have gone in wages and salaries to the custodians and caretakers and school secretaries in Toronto. It has pocketed about \$4 million, made \$4 million, off the dispute in Windsor. This government has made money out of this.

I say to the government, put your legislation aside, take the money that you have pocketed from the Toronto board of education, give it back to the board so they can put it back on the bargaining table, let the parties continue to talk and continue to try to find a collective agreement, and our children and our schools will be better off. I think if you did that, we could have by tonight a collective agreement. It is your refusal to do that and your insistence on this draconian legislation that in fact is creating more difficulty.

I said that our goal here was to try to create enough time for the board of education and the union to come together. I understand that CablePulse24 is reporting that the Toronto board of education and CUPE have agreed on a binding arbitration process, but that the government has not agreed to remove the Toronto board and the union from Bill 13. So in other words, the board and the union have agreed on a process and they want the government to butt out, but the government doesn't want them to agree on a process.

This government insists on ramming their legislation through despite all the warnings about how draconian, how unfair, how unjust it is. This is exactly the kind of situation we wanted to avoid, a situation where the union and the board of education can agree on a process, but



the government is going to get in their way and inflict its unbalanced, unworkable, unfair legislation on them.

I hope that as we are here this afternoon, and who knows, perhaps into the evening and into the night, the government will start to reflect on the position as it now stands, where you have the board and the union in an agreement, where they have agreed on the process they want to go forward with. I hope the government will take the time to reconsider and that the government will at some point this afternoon or tonight reconsider its position and agree to back off and let the union and the board of education find a settlement they can live with, one they can reach by mutual consent. That to me seems to be the wise course.

Why impose your direction when the board and the union have already come to an agreement on process? If I listened to the Minister of Labour earlier, he said, I think, that that's what he wanted, that he wanted the board and the union to find their own process and to come to an agreement. It would seem that's where we are now, and by the minister's own words I think the minister should now step back and say, "We're prepared to cease and desist. We're prepared to stand off. We're prepared to let the board and the union go forward with the process they have worked out and conclude a collective agreement they can mutually live with." That's what we are hoping will happen here today.

I want to point out something else about the legislation the government has put forward. I've raised all the issues to deal with the funding formula. I've pointed out how inadequate the funding formula is, virtually across the province, how it is resulting in difficulty after difficulty for virtually every board of education and in every school.

One of the other odious parts of this legislation is that instead of recognizing that there's a problem with the funding formula, instead of recognizing that there's a problem that needs to be addressed, this legislation says that no matter how inadequate the funding formula is, no matter how much hardship it results in, any agreement has to live within that funding formula. So this legislation essentially continues the wrong-headed road the government is on of not providing enough money for special education, of not providing enough funding for textbooks, of not providing enough funding for busing, of not providing enough funding to deal with class size.

The legislation as put forward by the government essentially continues that straitjacket that is causing so many problems from community to community across the province. I just say to the government again, you can't continue to do this. You can't continue to force boards of education into more desperate circumstances, unless the real goal of this government is to so undermine our public education system, to so undermine our public schools, that more and more parents, recognizing that the school is underfunded, recognizing there's not enough money for textbooks, recognizing there's not enough money for school librarians, for music teachers, for physical education programs, seeing that, start to with-

draw their children from public schools and put them in private schools, unless that is the true agenda of the government. If that is the true agenda of the government—and I have to say I believe it is.

**1500**

This government said five years ago that it intended to create a crisis in education. That's what the Minister of Education said. I believe, as I watch this unfolding, as I see this draconian legislation force the union back to work and as I see the general direction, I have to conclude that the real goal of the government is to so completely undermine our public schools that parents more and more start to withdraw their children from public schools.

I just want to say a word about that, a word about where that leads and what it means. As a society, we can organize our lives such that almost everything we do is dominated by private corporations. Private corporations can provide health care, but the lesson from the United States is that when they provide health care it costs more money and those people who have modest or lower incomes and a lot of families who have middle incomes get left out. We could deal with education privately. We could have a series of private schools, but the reality of that, the reality of those private schools, is that, again, lower-income families, modest-income families and a lot of middle-income families simply would not be able to afford the resources that their children would need to get a good education.

The most efficient way and the most effective way to pay for and to provide education is through a public system where we all contribute. When we all contribute, we're able to build up the resources and we're able to build up the infrastructure, to train teachers, the special education classes that now allow us to meet the needs of our children. But those very things that we need are the things that this government is now cutting because of the inadequacy of the funding formula. I think, as I say, the real goal is to drive us to more and more private schools.

I have to ask people, would that be in the interest of the majority of citizens of Ontario? Thinking longer term, is it in the interest of our economic future if we have more and more people in a privatized education system whose parents don't have the money to finance their education and therefore they get an inadequate education? Is that in all of our long-term best interests when you have a privatized education system and more and more people can't get the educational resources, the educational training and experience they need and therefore cannot perform up to the level that they otherwise could in our economy, cannot be as productive as they otherwise would, cannot make the contribution that they otherwise would? I think anyone who reflects on that says, "No, that's not the way we want to go." But it's pretty clear, if you follow this government and what they're doing, that's where it's headed.

The Premier recently said in the throne speech that they're in favour of more school choice. I want people out there to understand how loaded that term is. I invite

people, for example, to go to Edmonton. In Edmonton you can send your child to any school within the urban district, within the boundary of the school board. They also dramatically reduced the funding formula. So what's happening is that you have lower- and modest-income neighbourhoods where parents aren't able to do the kind of fundraising—you don't have any Imperial Oil executives there or Petro-Canada executives living in the neighbourhood, so parents can't do that kind of fundraising for their school. In other well-to-do neighbourhoods they're able to fundraise to a large extent, and so you have a real imbalance developing in the schools. You have parents trying to get their kids out of the school in a modest-income neighbourhood and into a school in a high-income neighbourhood. Virtually everybody is kicking down and kissing up. That's the phenomenon.

You have to ask yourself when you see this, people trying to move their kids out of a modest-income neighbourhood into a higher-income neighbourhood, who's benefiting from this? Who's benefiting when a whole section of schools is literally being written off, when they're not being adequately funded?

This government says that it favours school choice, and actually the Liberals say this too. That's another area where the Liberals and the Conservatives agree. They agree on this draconian force-them-back-to-work legislation and they agree on what I think is a loaded term: school choice.

If you look at Edmonton and a lot of American cities, school choice means that some schools are literally allowed to diminish, and other schools are able to do all kinds of private fundraising and therefore have all kinds of programs and assets. You have people leaving certain parts of the city, trying to move to other parts of the city, and in the end no one benefits from this, no one is better off. I suggest that's really where the government is headed.

The next stage after school choice is, of course, school vouchers, which means that the money follows the student, and if the parents take the child out of their modest or middle-income neighbourhood and move them into the higher-income neighbourhood, then the funding formula follows as well. Then you're really on a ladder where some people are moving up and a lot of people are being forced down. At the end of the day, this is not beneficial. This does not give us, as a society, the level of educational ability, the level of educational achievement we want and need to have.

If you follow what this government has done with the funding formula, if you follow their newly found fascination with the loaded term "choice," and then you follow some of the spokespersons within the Conservative Party who say school vouchers is where we ought to go, I think you can see where this leads: more and more privatization of education, and less and less attention being paid to those children who need extra help, to those children who need access to the textbooks and the training, and we end up with a more and more divided society, one where I think, at the end of the day, all of us are no better off.

I see that the Minister of Labour is here. Now that he is here, I want to say again that if the reports on Cable-Pulse24 are true—and I think they are—that the board and CUPE have agreed on a binding arbitration process, then if the minister is true to his word, as he indicated here earlier today, he should withdraw this legislation. I think that if he's true to the words he uttered here earlier, he should stand on his feet and say, "We are not interested in proceeding with this legislation insofar as it concerns the Toronto board of education. They have come up with their own process, and that was the goal here all along." So I'm hopeful that sometime this afternoon, sometime this evening, sometime tonight, the minister will actually come to that conclusion and will actually make that statement.

I could go on. In fact, part of me wants to speak further, but I know I have a number of colleagues here who also want to speak, so I will only proceed for a few more minutes and then allow my colleagues their opportunity.

I mentioned that the number of private schools and the number of students going to private schools has been increasing under this government. It's actually quite astonishing. In 1994-95 there were 551 private schools in the province and 75,000 students were attending private schools. Last year, in 1999-2000, the number of private schools had jumped to 722 and the number of students in private schools had jumped to 102,970. This represents an increase of 24% in the number of private schools and 27% in private school enrolment under the Conservative government.

Therefore, as I say, as to the real agenda of the government, as they underfund the school system, as they underfund special education, as they underfund student transportation, as they underfund textbooks, as they underfund caretaking and the secretarial, maintenance and custodial work in the schools, as they underfund all these things, I think their real goal is to drive more and more parents into a private education system. If you look at the numbers, that certainly appears to be what's happened.

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The final point I want to put forward is, since this legislation is so draconian and since we disagree with it so fundamentally, we have to point out to the government that we intend to put forward some amendments. We wouldn't be doing our job if we didn't try to take the worst elements out of this bill. Our amendments will do the following:

Our amendments would ensure that if the parties cannot reach a negotiated settlement in the narrow time frame allowed, the dispute will be resolved by a recognized arbitrator—not Stockwell Day, not some other person who has no experience and no credibility in arbitration, whom the minister could appoint under his legislation—who enjoys the respect and the confidence of both the school boards and the unions. This will be done by amending the bill to allow the parties to select an arbitrator agreeable to both sides.



Second, we think there should be an amendment which would require the minister to choose from a list of recognized arbitrators in the province of Ontario.

Third, we believe that the stipulation allowing the minister to impose an arbitrator with absolutely no experience whatsoever in resolving labour disputes should be removed. We would untie the hands of the arbitrator and allow for a genuine solution by removing the absolute bar against an award which imposes even a temporary deficit on either school board. We would give the arbitrator the flexibility needed to fashion a meaningful settlement by removing the unnecessary requirement that they must show in writing how the boards would meet the costs of the award without incurring a deficit.

As I say, if the Minister of Labour would simply be true to the words which he uttered here earlier today when he said that he wanted to see the parties reach their own agreement, if he would only be true to those words and recognize that the board and the union have reached a process of binding arbitration which they are both in agreement with, then the minister should withdraw the application of this bill, at least with respect to Toronto.

Many of my colleagues, I know, want to speak and so after I've made this last point I'm going to allow them to do it. There are two more odious and awful sections of the bill and, for government members, who probably haven't read it, I want them to know what they are. There's a clause dealing with the appointment and proceedings of a mediator-arbitrator not subject to review. It says, "If a person has been appointed as a mediator-arbitrator by or under this act"—by the Minister of Labour—"it shall be presumed conclusively that the appointment was properly made under this act and no application shall be made to question the appointment or to prohibit or restrain any of the mediator-arbitrator's proceedings."

Let's assume that the government arbitrator makes a complete mess of the arbitration. Let's assume that the person whom the government appoints makes a complete mess such that any reasonable person in Ontario would say, "You can't let this happen, this is absurd." Under the ordinary rules of justice in this province and in every other province, the parties, or one of them, would be able to make an application for judicial review. That is, the superior courts would be able to look at the decision and say, "This thing is so absurd, it is so unreasonable, it is so completely ridiculous that we cannot let it stand." That's the kind of administrative law protection that we have to ensure that bad decisions aren't made.

This section that I just read would allow that kind of absurd decision to stand. It doesn't even allow the courts to step in and say, "The arbitrator was completely outside of his jurisdiction, the arbitrator has completely done this wrong and therefore it cannot stand."

This government is so stuck on their way and their way only that they won't even let our courts, our judges—who are independently appointed and who are, to all intents and purposes from all perspectives, independent and neutral—supervise this arbitration.

Then the final section, section 13, says, "While this act is in force, the parties shall not appoint an arbitrator, mediator or mediator-arbitrator to settle matters in dispute between them relating to a bargaining unit otherwise than under this act, and anything done by a person so appointed has no effect."

A really ugly, awful, odious section; the government is saying that even though the Toronto board and the union now have found an arbitrator and have agreed on the process, the government would completely wipe that out. The government would completely wipe out something that the board and the union have agreed to. When you read this, you have to ask yourself, "Is the government trying to get the children back in the classroom? Are they trying to achieve an agreement, or are they actually trying to create a more destructive situation?" I think any reasonable person who reads this would conclude the latter. This is just absurd. This is wrong. This should not be allowed to stand.

I challenge the Minister of Labour to live up to the comments he made here earlier today, to recognize that the Toronto board and the union have now come together on a binding arbitration process, to simply say, "This legislation will not apply." That's what he ought to do, given the statements he made here himself earlier, so I challenge him to do that.

I've given all of my reasons why I think these kinds of controversies and disputes are going to happen on a continuing basis in our schools across the province. I've pointed out the inadequacy of the funding formula and how that inadequacy manifests itself in so many different ways depending upon where people live in this province.

I have pointed out that if you compare Ontario to other jurisdictions, we are lagging far, far behind in our investments in education. I have pointed out that this draconian legislation which has been put forward simply furthers that direction, creates an even more unfair, unbalanced playing field.

I've pointed out, as the news media is now pointing out, that the parties have actually come together and have agreed on a binding arbitration process and therefore there is no need for this legislation.

I have pointed out that in terms of the working environment, this legislation will lead to a more difficult work environment; indeed, it may poison the work environment. I don't think anybody would want their children going to school in the kind of difficult working environment that this legislation would create.

For all those reasons, the government should withdraw it and, certainly in the case of the Toronto board and the CUPE local union, allow them to proceed on their own binding arbitration process that the Minister of Labour spoke of so glowingly only a few minutes ago in this House.

With that, I'm going to conclude my remarks, because I know many of my colleagues have comments that they want to make as well.

**The Speaker:** There is some time. I don't know if you want to share it. If you do, you know you can't speak

again. OK, no one wants to share the time. The leader indicated that he was sharing it. He didn't say anybody specific.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I am certainly pleased to rise with respect to the debate this afternoon.

I have to point out very clearly that what the member opposite has been speaking about is a process that is applying to the Toronto situation. We never heard him talk at all about what is happening in Windsor in terms of the situation there, which is just as serious, just as important and obviously has significant ramifications for the school system down there. He's not addressing that, and maybe he doesn't care. I don't know. That's for him to say.

But the bottom line is, when you read this legislation, it says very clearly that once this piece of legislation is put in place, the parties have seven days to have the matter resolved. That's the process: seven days before the government process kicks in.

They have been at these negotiations for a long time. It's a very serious situation when you consider to go out on strike. That's not something that would happen willy-nilly. The Minister of Labour, in the processes that are available—conciliation, mediation—has used all the methods possible to end this strike. It's up to the parties, when they make that decision with respect to a strike, to consciously consider the ramifications. They have been out now for far too long. It's time for the kids to get back to school. This process allows them to make a deal. This process allows us to have the kids back in school. Quite frankly, what the member opposite is offering is very little in this process.

1520

**Mr Colle:** Given the fact that we're dealing, certainly in the Toronto situation, with 300,000 students in the mega school board and their families, hundreds of thousands of family members have been affected by this unfortunate strike. We are dealing with a very serious matter, because parents, relatives are staying home, have not gone to work in some cases to stay home with children. As I mentioned before in my other comments, I have been especially affected by the heartfelt tales of parents with special-needs children who have had to bear enormous emotional costs as a result of this strike. In fact, a lot of these children were told to stay at home from day one. They've been at home for four weeks. It's an impact of enormous proportion.

I think our party is saying we want to do something here that will once and for all get the children back to school and the families stabilized again. We want to do it in a very forthright way that basically ends the turmoil that has gone on for too long. That is the bottom line here: to end the turmoil, to do it properly, and that's why we've supported this legislation.

Under the legislation of this government, money saved in salaries goes back under the control of the provincial Minister of Education. We want to make sure that every cent that is saved from the strike goes back into the schools.

I know the third party has made a laughingstock of themselves on this issue. It's time to be serious. Support the children and the families and forget about your petty politics for once.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** We know where the government and the Conservative Party stand on back-to-work legislation. Heck, they presented the legislation. They believe in forcing workers back to work and denying those workers, in this case, the thousands of incredibly hard-working women and men at the Toronto District School Board, many of whom I've had a chance to know and meet—and these are good people, these are hard-working people, these are committed people. They also happen to be, unfortunately for them, in the eyes of this government, trade unionists. This government doesn't believe in free collective bargaining. That's obvious.

We also know now very clearly where Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party of Ontario stand. They don't believe in free collective bargaining either, because they're supporting this same legislation with the same vigour and enthusiasm and haste as their Conservative friends sitting in government, their bed partners. If the Liberals want to crawl into bed with the Tories in a very concentrated attack on working women and men and on free collective bargaining, God bless, but it ain't going to be a ménage à trois, because, I tell you, you don't know where New Democrats stand. We're standing with those working women and men at the Toronto District School Board. We're going to oppose this legislation. We've done everything we could to make sure that those workers have had the opportunity to effect a negotiated settlement before this incredibly vicious alternative is imposed upon them by this government.

The Liberals don't even have the good sense to oppose this legislation on what it does to the very fundamentals and foundations of arbitration law in this province. The Liberals are supporting the imposition of a named arbitrator. The Liberals are supporting the clause that prevents judicial review as to issues of bias or the gross impropriety of that decision. The Liberals support the incredibly restrictive mandate of that arbitrator. The Liberals are with the Tories against the workers; we're with the workers against this government.

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** It's a pleasure to speak on Bill 13 this afternoon. I want to echo some of the comments made by my colleagues from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford and Eglinton-Lawrence. I think this strike has been going on for a long period of time. The leader of the third party talks about section 12 of the bill. He's a lawyer; I'm not. Read it. There's an opportunity for both sides to negotiate an agreement prior to this act coming into being.

You can talk about all the labour agreements, but just remember a number of years ago when you brought in the social contract, and you talk about negotiating in good faith. Who started the whole process? It's funny, when we're sitting on this side of the House, how all of a sudden we can be critical of the other side.



I would like to point out that within my own riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex the students of Lambton-Kent have been locked out for the past couple days because there is a disagreement between the board and the teachers. I agree that whether you're union or non-union, profit, no profit, whatever it is, everybody works hard in this province and everybody earns their dollars. When I buy something, I don't ask whether it's union-dollar-made or whether it was made by a non-union person.

The thing is, we have to look at what is for the common good of the students. Today is April 27. Two months from now the kids will be out of school. Now, you want to wait for another month for this agreement to be reached? Come on, give your head a shake. Let's do what is good for the students once and for all. Because you're on that side of the House, the oxygen level may be a bit lower, but I'm sure it is the same level of oxygen that we have here. So let's do the right thing for the students and let's pass this bill.

**The Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Hampton:** I guess I have to quote the government members' own bill back to them. In section 12 it says, "If an arbitrator was appointed to settle matters in dispute between the parties relating to a bargaining unit before this act comes into force, on and after that day anything done by a person so appointed has no effect." In fact, I have the letter from the Toronto District School Board and from CUPE to the Minister of Labour that says, "We enclose the order of mediator Mort Mitchnick, which order constitutes the settlement of the parties in respect of the renewal of the collective agreement between CUPE local 4400 and the Toronto District School Board. This order provides for the termination of the strike and the return of employees to work on or after April 30. We respectfully request that the Toronto District School Board and CUPE local 4400 be exempted from the provisions of Bill 13 currently before the Legislative Assembly. We know that the government would have preferred that the parties reach their own resolution of their own disputes," and they have done so.

All I'm pointing out to the Minister of Labour and the government members is, according to the minister's own words that we heard him say here earlier today, why, Minister, won't you now at least take the Toronto board out of this legislation and let them proceed with their own? As far as your section 12, you know that it essentially would wipe out this agreement. So why are you implementing your destructive process for one the parties have already agreed to themselves? Follow your own words here earlier today and allow the parties to follow their own process which they've agreed to. That seems to me the more just way and it seems to be what you stated you wanted to do here earlier today.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Lankin:** I appreciate having the opportunity, although it's unfortunate that we're here to deal with this today, particularly now with respect to the Toronto board, when the parties have arrived at an agreement. I guess from here on in what we'll be doing is talking to

you and hopefully providing now, not the parties with the time to reach an agreement but providing the government with the time to see the wisdom of allowing the locally negotiated arbitration process to go forward.

**1530**

Because I think the whole process of arbitration in this legislation can become quite complicated, I want to set out my firm understanding of the legislation in front of us and of the agreement that has been arrived at between the parties and the relationship between the two, and what needs to occur to allow in the case of Toronto the locally negotiated agreement to proceed at this point in time.

Before doing that I want to say, with respect to the Windsor board of education and the Service Employees International Union local there, we recently received a phone call indicating they are currently seeking the opportunity to speak to each other about a potentially similar agreement. I can't tell you that will unfold, but I can tell you that the time we are dedicating to this discussion here in this House is productive time that is allowing local parties to try and fashion agreements that meet their local needs and allow them to come through a very difficult process with respect for each other and return to the workplace without the effects of a draconian piece of legislation and the poisoned workplace that would result from that.

It was our goal and our intent as the New Democratic Party caucus, as my leader, Howard Hampton, has said, to provide the parties with that opportunity, and the parties have seized the opportunity in the case of Toronto and have arrived at a successful conclusion to that. In the case of Windsor, we wish them our best and hope they too are able to do that.

I want to explain the procedure in this legislation as it is set out with respect to anything the parties might agree to locally now that we're into the final debate of the bill.

The member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford a few moments ago made reference to section 11 of this bill and indicated that the parties still have a number of days set out in the legislation, seven more days, in which they could arrive at a collective agreement. There's no reason for us to have regard to the agreement the Toronto Board of Education and the union representing the educational support workers for the Toronto Board of Education have arrived at because they've got seven days. So nothing needs to be done; nothing needs to be changed in this legislation. But it is very important that you go from section 11—and I understand the member's point about a negotiated collective agreement—to section 12, which deals with the events as we've seen them unfold today. It deals specifically with the events of the two parties agreeing to a binding arbitration process and to an arbitrator before the passage of this legislation.

At some time in the morning hours of today the parties signed an agreement to a process for binding arbitration. They agreed and named an arbitrator, and the agreement makes reference to the back-to-work protocol, how to facilitate getting the schools cleaned, getting the children back, which is their interest too; it's set out in the agree-

ment. However, if this legislation is passed as is without amendment sometime in the evening hours of today, section 12 becomes applicable, and it reads, "If an arbitrator was appointed"—by the parties; that's happened—"to settle matters in dispute between the parties relating to" one of the bargaining units named in this bill—that's the Toronto board—"before this act comes into force"—what happened this morning; the act isn't in force until it has passed third reading and then proclaimed later tonight—then "anything done by" that person, the arbitrator, "has no effect."

If I may put that into layman's terms, what it says is, if we pass this legislation without amending it, the fact that the Toronto Board of Education and the union representing the educational support workers for the Toronto Board of Education have agreed to a process and an arbitrator to resolve their disputes, a process and an arbitrator that are mutually agreeable to both parties, the fact that they've agreed to that will have no force and effect. Once this bill is proclaimed, that and the order of the mediator working with them that sets out the agreement of the process and the naming of the arbitrator, become null and void. What it means is that upon passage of this legislation, upon proclamation of this legislation tonight, the government process of naming their chosen arbitrator, of putting their terms and conditions on what the arbitrator can consider, their terms and conditions on the length of the contract, a whole range of other things that are not mutually agreeable to the local parties, is what will prevail. The government's centralized, imposed solution is what will prevail.

In the throne speech I heard the government say they didn't think the education system could be controlled from Queen's Park. I heard the minister on many occasions, including today in his opening remarks, say very clearly that they didn't want to become embroiled in this; they found they'd reached the point where they decided that course of action was necessary for them to take, but that they preferred that the parties arrive at a local agreement. Well, the parties have done that, OK? They've said, "Here is the process of arbitration; here is the arbitrator; here is a back-to-work protocol; here are some interim steps while the arbitrator is considering the whole range of issues." It's a very comprehensive agreement that both parties have signed and that the mediator, the qualified and well-respected mediator working with them, has written up and placed in an order and signed and so ordered, on behalf of the very process set out and overseen by the Minister of Labour's own ministry.

How is it, then, that there could be any debate of whether or not the government would agree to move a simple amendment to exempt the Toronto Board of Education and the union representing the workers who have been on strike from the implementation and the effects of this legislation? I see one member of cabinet shaking his head. I don't understand why, when the agreement has been arrived at. Why is your arbitration process better than the one the parties have agreed to? There is no difference in terms of when the children would be back in school.

**Mr Beaubien:** What's the guarantee for the kids in your agreement?

**Ms Lankin:** What guarantees? The member across said there is no guarantee for the kids. If I may, the member says, "Tell us about the guarantee for the kids in this agreement." In fact, your legislation makes no reference to when employees would be taken back into the schools to begin the cleaning process. Your legislation doesn't give a guarantee of what day the schools will be open and clean and meet health and safety standards to proceed.

The agreement that the parties have arrived at sets out the back-to-work protocol that gets the workers in as soon as possible to clean the schools and to get started. So there is a guarantee for the kids in their agreement, where there isn't in your legislation.

OK, there's one argument. Please, give me another argument, given all the words of the minister that you wanted a locally negotiated settlement, why it's better, now that it's there and you could go with it, for you to impose your solution, one which, by the way, is objected to by both parties. As we speak, the Toronto Board of Education is holding a press conference, urging the minister to please allow the agreement they arrived at with their own employees to go forward. Why do you feel capable of imposing, or that it is warranted for you to impose, your solution over that of the employer in this situation, your solution over a solution that has been agreed to by the employer and the workers in a very difficult set of circumstances?

We could see the Minister of Labour come into this House and indicate his willingness with an amendment to the bill to allow the locally negotiated agreement to proceed unaffected by his legislation. In fact, if you gave it a little bit of time, we suspect the Windsor board could be in the same situation. He could come in and tell us that. We can, with co-operation and agreement, move quickly to pass that amendment and see the hard work of the parties given the respect of this Legislature and the respect of this government, and see them allowed to proceed through the process of arriving at a collective agreement.

1540

I had wanted originally to spend some time talking about the legislation itself and my concerns about it. You've heard many of the members refer to previous occasions in the House, under governments of all political stripes, where back-to-work legislation in the education sector has been presented and has been passed. Those comments have been put forward in such a way as to suggest, "A bill is a bill is a bill. A law is a law is a law. They're all the same. You give it a title and if it sounds the same—back to work—it is the same." Well, this bill is fundamentally different.

I remember the time in this province when compulsory arbitration was structured in a way as to be a fair alternative to free-market collective bargaining. What I mean by "fair alternative" is that it was designed to replicate the result of free-market collective bargaining in



terms of terms, conditions, salaries and benefits. The belief was that those people who either do not have the right to strike or who work in the public sector, where after a period of time government and the public expect an alternative resolution mechanism than a strike, should not be in a situation where the workers are expected by virtue of government funding decisions to subsidize the delivery of public services.

There have been some astounding arbitration awards written over the years that go into detail, explaining how unfair it would be if simply, external to the bargaining table as we have in this situation—the government of Ontario is not a party at the bargaining table—and by virtue of decisions they make on funding and then try to impose in the legislation, the workers themselves are expected to subsidize the delivery of that public service through substandard wages that don't replicate what's going on in the free-market collective bargaining world.

Surely there should be fairness. If you take away the market forces of strike and lockout, the *quid pro quo* is that the process that replaces it fairly attempt to replicate what would have happened in that private free-market collective bargaining situation.

This legislation is one of a number of pieces of legislation this government has brought forward that takes the guts out of a fair arbitration process as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism to strikes and lockouts. This piece of legislation sets out incredible restrictions on the arbitrator and what the arbitrator can consider. It doesn't say, as with agreements people have arrived at, "Take a look at all the conditions facing the employer and the employees and the policy issues, but you can look at other things as well." In the parties' case, they know they need to be competitive. They know that to maintain a high-quality, good workforce they have to be competitive in their wages with the board next door or with the municipality down the street or with the factory down the street in terms of what the rates are for maintenance workers and other categories that might be similar job classifications. They know that. They want the arbitrator to be able to look at that.

The government is saying no on a whole series of fronts on the mechanisms that have traditionally been built into back-to-work legislation to allow for fair arbitration. This government has ripped those out of the bill and then stands here and says, "It's just back-to-work legislation like every other one that's been passed and therefore you should all accept it. You should be consistent in your position and accept this too."

If it were consistent with the previous bills, there might be another debate going on in this House, but it is not. It is draconian legislation. As my leader, Howard Hampton, said, it is legislation that will leave us worse off in the conditions in our schools, in the working relationships in our schools, which affect our children's education. So please don't tell me, as some members have, that my comments don't have at their heart an understanding of the importance of getting our children back into school—but into a school where they can have a quality education.

I find myself really—I was going to say "puzzled" but, you know, in a sense I'm not. In a sense I should just accept it. But it is beyond common sense that at this point in time, when we can respect a locally negotiated solution, we have a government that is saying, "No, we know better. No, tut-tut-tut, that silly board, those silly workers. Their agreement isn't relevant. We're going to impose our own centrally designed solution on the parties."

The minister said to me, "Oh well, you know it's complicated. It's an 11-page agreement. It's pretty complicated." Well, it's the local agreement. He should have a blind eye to what's contained in it, although I'll tell you, it names an arbitrator, it sets out the dates of arbitration, it facilitates getting the workers back to work quicker to clean the schools to get the kids back in quicker than your legislation would. It sets out ranges of salaries, of interim steps that can be taken that the parties had agreed on. There's a whole range of things that are very good and would give a sense of closure to the dispute that has gone on, that the parties have worked hard at to arrive at a resolution.

Why is there no respect from the government for the hard work of the parties and the solution they arrived at? Why would you impose your solution? Why would you not respect this at this point in time? It can be done easily and I would hope that the members don't say too much more about why they're not going to do it, because the minister's in the backroom taking a look at this. We're engaged, we hope, in an exercise of convincing you to take another look at this because it really is the best solution. Our kids will be back in school; they'll be back in school earlier under this agreement than under your legislation. It sets out the time frame for people to go back into the school as soon as possible to start cleaning. That's not in your legislation. Your legislation doesn't accomplish that.

What is your problem with a local solution? Have you read it?

**Mr O'Toole:** Yes.

**Ms Lankin:** Do you agree with it? Do you have a problem? What is the nature of your problem? Let's have a debate about why your solution is better than what the employer and the workers have agreed to. You are not the employer. Although you're the funder, you're the ghost at the bargaining table, you are not the employer in this situation, the Toronto school board is. The employer has signed this agreement. The union has signed this agreement. You have, I believe, no right to impose your solution when there is a local negotiated settlement. But your legislation, if you pass it as it is, will do that.

**Mr Beaubien:** Why was it signed today?

**Ms Lankin:** I believe that the extra time that the parties were given over the last two days that afforded them the opportunity to speak to each other, both of whom wanted to avoid your legislation. The conditions helped them arrive at this agreement. The agreement's been arrived at. Why would you impose—

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** It's not an agreement.

**Ms Lankin:** I'm hearing a member say it's not an agreement. It is an agreement to arbitration, with a named arbitrator and a back-to-work schedule and whole range of other things. It is much more so an agreement through the parties than a piece of legislation which imposes a totally different set of terms, where you dictate how long the collective agreement will be, you dictate what the arbitrator will look like, you dictate who the arbitrator is, you dictate, if that arbitrator can't do it, who you will appoint. You take all of the control away from the parties.

Why would you defend it at this point in time? What is this sort of dig-in mentality? I implore members of the government. I hope the minister is reviewing this as we speak. We'll continue to speak to you this afternoon to give you the time to reflect upon this. The local process should be respected. You've said that. They've now got a resolution. The local resolution should be respected. Anything else sets out that your agenda always was to impose your view of what a solution is, your funding formula as a solution, and not respect local parties. It will further poison the workplace. It will not be good for our children's education. I implore you to reconsider.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott) :** Questions and comments?  
1550

**Mrs Marland:** I have a great deal of regard for the previous speaker, the member for Beaches-East York, but it's unfortunate that on this subject today I have to suggest that her caucus does not have this right. They still don't understand that these children, these young people, including elementary and secondary-school-aged children, have already been out of school for four weeks.

The two parties, the two sides, have already had four weeks to go through the negotiated settlements, all the alternatives. What we're saying simply by passing this legislation today is, "Enough is enough," and it doesn't prohibit the process from continuing. What it does is, it gets the children back into school on Monday. It gets normality back to those families' lives that have been so adversely affected by this disruption.

In terms of this member saying we should allow extra time for the agreement, my goodness, we have sat back for four weeks and allowed the parties to go through due process. This bill doesn't stop that, and frankly, when the leader of the New Democratic Party talks about the funding formula being at the base of this problem, he doesn't get that either. The funding formula was one of the many things that this government has done for the future of education and the young people in this province by guaranteeing that every student in this province, no matter where they live, is eligible to have the same amount of money spent on them, not like \$8,000 per pupil at Ottawa-Carleton while Peel would have \$4,800 per pupil.

We are acting in the best interests of the families and children in this board at this time, the Toronto board and the Windsor board. Let's look forward to the rest of the process evolving and a successful solution.

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** We believe that the right thing to do is to get the kids back into the class-

room. We believe that is where they belong. That is why some time ago our leader, Dalton McGuinty, put out a wonderful, acceptable-to-both-sides, so-called peace plan. There was a proposal, there was a policy put out by the Liberal Party, by our leader, Dalton McGuinty, and indeed it was acceptable to both, to see the working-class people, the working-class kids back in school where they belong. That is the first priority.

Of course the unions have a role, of course the workers are underpaid, and they deserve reasonable, equitable compensation. But our priority is to have the kids back in the classroom where they belong. That is why we proposed to the government a long time ago to accept that particular plan. We can't let the government go scot-free; we are here today because of the position the government has taken over the past several years. Had the government accepted Mr McGuinty's proposal, we wouldn't be here today discussing this issue on a Friday afternoon and evening. We wouldn't have to have created this massive disturbance in our education system, creating chaos in so many working families' lives. The odd family can afford it; that's fine, they can afford it. But I think we have created huge chaos in working-class families.

For us, it is important that we get the kids back into the classroom. Three weeks is long enough. Three weeks have caused enough chaos among many working-class families. We believe the education of our kids is most important, and it is to have them in the classroom in order for them to get that.

**Mr Kormos:** I take great offence at the language used by the member for York West, which quite frankly is consistent with what every other Liberal in this Legislature has been spouting during the course of this debate. How dare that member, how dare the Liberals talk about chaos among working-class families. What about the chaos for the women and men, the sisters and brothers of CUPE 4400 here in Toronto? What about the chaos for the sisters and brothers of Service Employees International Union in Windsor, who are being denied by the Conservatives and the Liberals of Ontario the right to freely collectively bargain an agreement because the Liberals are ready to crawl into bed with the Conservatives in this attack on working people and this attack on free collective bargaining, in this very specific attack, part of an organized litany of attacks on the trade union movement because the Liberals are prepared to collaborate with Mike Harris and the Tories? Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals collaborating with Mike Harris and the Tories on yet another attack on working people and the trade union movement in this province.

This arbitration deal in this legislation is unprecedented. It undermines the arbitration structure. It undermines centuries of common law surrounding the development of arbitration, and you people simply either don't get it or don't care. I suspect you don't care. You have a very specific interest in undermining centuries of precedent in common law around arbitration.

You have, in an unprecedented way, put arbitration under attack in this province. You are diminishing it as



an effective means and one that has historically been used to effect settlement between disputant parties. You are using it in this instance to impose your hand-picked arbitrator, who I predict will display more bias than any arbitrator has ever been permitted to display. In fact, you've denied the parties the right to challenge that very arbitrator for even the most blatant display of bias.

This is criminal, and I tell you—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much. I recognize the member for Durham.

**Mr O'Toole:** The member for Beaches-East York has a reputation of being fair and reasonable, and I want to be on the record as saying that. I understand one of her comments as being puzzled and frustrated, because I believe she is reflecting what I am hearing, that people—parents, children and indeed many educators—are very frustrated and puzzled as well. In fact, they are sick and tired of the last two or three years, perhaps the last five years, of this wrangling between David Cooke and the teachers, and before that Sean Conway, and Minister Johnson when he was here, and now Minister Ecker, and the unions—Earl Manners specifically. David Cooke tried to deal with them. I guess in this case we're probably dealing with Sid Ryan. They just don't get it. They're using children, it's very clear. The taxpayers of Ontario, the parents, the children are clearly being used by those two people who try to put children in front of the train for their own gains.

There are two sections in the bill that I would encourage the third party to read. Subsection 3(3) says, "As soon as this act comes into force, each bargaining agent shall terminate any strike by members of its bargaining unit or units that is in effect immediately before that day." In other words, any that are on strike or actions will have to cease those actions so students within two days should be back in school. That's the intention of the Liberal Party, because they're falling in behind us on this, and that's good to see.

The other section, subsection 4(1), "Subject to section 6, no members of a bargaining unit shall strike and no person or trade union shall call or authorize or threaten to call or authorize a strike by any of the members." So in fact we're providing a forum for the children to get back in the classroom.

By the way, if you read—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much. The member for Beaches-East York has two minutes to reply.

**Ms Lankin:** I would like to respond very directly to the comments of the member for Durham and the comments of the member for Mississauga South.

First, to the member for Durham: the section that you just read with respect to the strike terminating, may I tell you what the agreement says? The agreement between the parties says that the strike will be terminated as of noon on the date of this order. That is noon of today if you allow this agreement to stand. As soon as you allow this agreement to stand, the strike is over.

It also says that the schools will resume—the same as your legislation—on Monday morning. In fact, though,

they go further. They say that in order for the schools to resume normal operations by 7 am on Monday morning, those employees who have to go in earlier to do the cleanup to get things ready will begin so today, the date of this order. Your legislation doesn't do that, so don't suggest that the parties want to go further.

Member for Mississauga South, please, you said this agreement would make things last longer. The dates are exactly the same, and in fact it facilitates cleaners going back into the schools, starting this evening and tomorrow and Sunday, to have the schools ready for 7 am on Monday morning. Your legislation does not do that. That's because they know how the system works. They know the work has to be done in advance.

It does not hold up anything. What it does is have the parties have the respect for each other to have arrived at an agreement and have that implemented. Your legislation, as it is currently written, stands in the way of that. Nothing harms the children by proceeding with this. Proceeding with your legislation and the bitter legacy it will leave will harm the children more.

Please, setting aside rhetoric and ideologies and differences, look at the reasonable nature of what is being proposed and allow the parties to implement their own agreement.

I want to tell you that SEIU in Windsor has just announced that it is looking at an agreement to take back to its members for ratification. Please, allow these processes to unfold.

1600

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bisson:** I must say I'm not happy to be rising to debate this particular legislation because I wish we could be debating other legislation that would be a net benefit to the citizens of Ontario. Instead, we find ourselves here today, on a Friday, debating a bill that is going to undo a lot of precedents that have been set in labour law, and I'll get to that in a minute, and as well, a bill that goes against the very principles of what the government says it wants to set out to do.

The government says it needs to do this legislation for the people to be able to get back to work so that the children could go to school on Monday morning. We know now that by negotiated settlement between CUPE and the Toronto board, there has actually been an agreement signed. They have come to that agreement themselves by way of a process that they've set out in a document they've presented to the Minister of Labour. In the case of the Toronto board, they have been able to negotiate an agreement that gets people back to work by Monday and allows the children to get back to school by Monday by a process done by themselves, just as we in the New Democratic Party said, "Allow the parties to negotiate a deal. Don't interfere. Don't come in with the heavy hand of government to muck things up. Allow the parties to work it out."

We were confident on Wednesday, and earlier than that, that the parties would be able to come to an agreement. The government said no. They didn't have con-

fidence that the parties could do so. They came in with legislation and they want to force a settlement on to the parties rather than find a way to have a negotiated agreement.

It is actually interesting that the member for Perth, who is the deputy Deputy Speaker these days, says, "I want a settlement, not an agreement." I think that says volumes. It says this government is not interested in allowing the parties to negotiate an agreement that is mutually acceptable to both parties. Rather, what they'd like to do is to come in, put a settlement, impose it, give it to them and nobody has anything to say, because that's the way this government has been operating.

Then the government stands back and says that this legislation is not as draconian as we make it out to be. I want to go through a couple of sections of this act, because it is some of the most reprehensible legislation I've seen come through this House when it deals with labour legislation. I just want to go through a couple of sections of it. The Minister of Labour probably would be interested, if he hasn't figured this out already. I'm sure he has, and I'll get to that.

It says under subsection 11(6) of the bill, "If a person has been appointed as a mediator-arbitrator by or under this act, it shall be presumed conclusively that the appointment was properly made under this act and no application shall be made to question the appointment or to prohibit or restrain any of the mediator-arbitrator's proceedings."

That means you can have an arbitrator appointed by Chris Stockwell and that person may know nothing about the arbitration process, may know nothing about law, may be in a direct conflict, being a person who worked for one of the parties, and may go in, impose a settlement that is factually wrong, that errs in law, and the parties have no ability to appeal that by way of judicial review.

**Mr Kormos:** Which is a long-standing process.

**Mr Bisson:** Exactly. As my good friend Peter Kormos points out, this is a long-standing process that's established under common law and has existed for hundreds of years. If an error is made in fact, when it comes to a decision made by an arbitrator or a judge, you have the ability for judicial review. It's there for a reason. It's there to make sure that those who are charged with making the decisions do so based on law, do so based on fact and, more importantly, do so based on fairness.

**Interjection:** And neutrality.

**Mr Bisson:** And neutrality. The government, by way of this section, is saying, no, nobody has the right to judicial review because only Chris Stockwell, the Minister of Labour, understands who should be an arbitrator.

But it goes further. This is the part that is really galling, because actually Ontario is one of the leading jurisdictions when it comes to professional arbitrators, people who are trained and understand the processes of arbitration and the laws they're entrusted to interpret and are able to find settlements. They're among the best in North America, if not the world. It's long been recognized. But under this bill—and listen to this; it's unbelievable—it

says, "In appointing a replacement arbitrator, the minister," Chris Stockwell, "may appoint a person who (a) has no previous experience as an arbitrator." So that means to say, yes, he can appoint anybody off the street he chooses, probably somebody who has the philosophical bent of the Conservative government, I would think. It doesn't matter, because that person doesn't have to have any experience.

**Mr Kormos:** In the old days, the Tories used to build their brother-in-law's liquor store. Now they just appoint him an arbitrator.

**Mr Bisson:** That's a good point; I like that one. The other provision: "(b) has not previously been or is not recognized as a person mutually acceptable to both trade unions and employers." That goes away from everything that stands as a tenet of how the arbitration process works. You're normally supposed to agree on the arbitrator, but he says, "Not only can I appoint somebody who has no experience, but I can also appoint somebody who may be hostile to one of the parties or predisposed to rule in favour of one party or the other." I would argue it's wrong to do that, either if the person is predisposed to the rules or the conditions of the union or the employer. It's supposed to be somebody who is going to look at facts and is going to be a person who is not partisan.

Clause (c) is really amazing. The Minister of Labour, Chris Stockwell, not only can appoint somebody with no experience and who is not acceptable to both parties; "is not a member of a class of persons which has been or is recognized as comprising individuals who are mutually acceptable to both trade unions and employers," which means to say you don't have to have anybody who knows what the heck they're doing once they come to the table.

Then it goes on to say under the next part, "If an arbitrator was appointed to settle matters in dispute between the parties relating to a bargaining unit before this act comes into force, on and after that day anything done by a person so appointed has no effect." For example, the parties come to an agreement prior to this legislation coming into effect. They negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement, as they have done under the agreement that has been signed by both parties today, and it means that Chris Stockwell can say, "Never mind that; it's gone. I want to impose my arbitrator on you to get the settlement that we think is best for the province of Ontario, namely Mike Harris."

Now, I think that's interesting, because the minister stood in this House earlier today and said, "We didn't want to get involved in this. We wanted them to get their own agreement. We didn't want to impose our hand all over the agreement that should be had between the two parties." But when you read section 12 of the legislation, it says that the government itself can throw out anything that was negotiated prior by the two parties and the government will appoint an arbitrator, and that arbitrator is going to go ahead and do, quite frankly, what Chris Stockwell wants. I say, shame on the government. I say that is completely contrary to what your stated aim is supposed to be and at the end of the day is completely



contrary to what is, I think, the basis of what should be good law.

Then the other part of the act goes on to say, and this is section 13, "While this act is in force, the parties shall not appoint an arbitrator, mediator or mediator-arbitrator to settle matters in dispute between them relating to a bargaining unit otherwise than under this act, and anything done by a person so appointed has no effect." Again, it basically kills any ability for Windsor, Sarnia, Toronto or anybody to come to any type of settlement when it comes to a negotiated agreement between the parties.

So I say to the government across the way, if you're serious about trying to find a way to get the parties to resolve their differences, if you're serious about trying to find a way to get the people back to work so that children can go back to school, at the very least you have an opportunity to show so today by removing this legislation out of the way that blocks the agreement between the Toronto board and the CUPE workers here in the city of Toronto. I would say take away the gun on what's happening in Windsor and Sarnia as well, because we need to find a way for people to come to an agreement themselves. I say again, shame on the government.

1610

I think it's interesting, as I said earlier, the comment that was made by the member from Perth, because I think it brings us right back to this particular debate. I quote the Deputy Speaker, who is now in the chair, or the deputy deputy. "I want a settlement, not an agreement." Well, excuse me. I would think that any law-abiding government, any decent government, any government that has an ounce of respect for law, any respect for working people, would want to see a negotiated agreement between the parties. But that's not what the government is saying by way of the heckling across the way; they're saying, "No, we want a settlement." That tells me that Chris Stockwell has made up his mind what he wants to do. He wants to impose a settlement on the board that's acceptable to him as the Minister of Labour in the name of his government and he doesn't give a darn what the parties come to when it comes to an agreement. Again, I think it demonstrates this government's predisposition to always err on the side of management and, in this case certainly, not err on the side of the working people of the province of Ontario. Not even close.

What galls me is, as we listen to the Liberals debate this particular bill, I'm telling you, it is really difficult to take. I have to say again—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bisson:** Here's where they are in the debate. They first of all come forward here with some kind of a plan that was created by some guy by the name of Dalton McGuinty, the leader of the Liberal Party. He comes in and says, "I have a wonderful plan, and if only Harris would accept it, it would resolve the problem." He said, "Here's my plan. I'm going to give an arbitrator the right to have the government spend more money and create a settlement." That's impossible. You can't do that. An

arbitrator can't force a government to spend money and put money back into another budget. That's a decision for this Legislature to make. So it tells me all they were looking for was a political hit.

But what really galls me is, as this legislation was brought into the House at first reading, we in the New Democratic Party forced a vote on first reading, and the Liberals showed their true colours. They voted with the government, against the workers and in favour of this legislation. It tells me what I've always known: when it comes to workers' rights, Liberals in the dark, in the corner on a picket line behind a corner, talking to a worker one to one, will say one thing, but when it comes to being counted in the House, they're clearly on the side of the Tories. In fact, I believe they're in bed with the Tories.

What was even worse was what happened yesterday here in the House when, yes, our caucus was caught in a 10-second moment of not watching what was happening in the House as closely as we should have. There's no question. We got the government the day before and we had the upper hand, and it happens in this place. You guys used the procedural rules, and they were in your favour yesterday, and you won the day. Fair game. We understand. I'm not happy, I don't like it, but I understand it. But what was galling was the Liberal Party, knowing that the government was asking for—

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Unanimous consent.

**Mr Bisson:** —unanimous consent—I thank my colleague—didn't say a word. They saw it coming, they heard it and they kept quiet.

But that wasn't bad enough. They could have stopped at that point. But when the government finally got their unanimous consent to move a motion to be able to sit today to force this legislation through, the Liberals got up and applauded. They were with the government. At least I'll give the government credit. I know where the PCs are coming from. They're on the side of the employers. They're not on the side of workers. I understand that. It's very simple: New Democrats are on the side of the workers. We understand that. But the Liberals are flipping both sides, and they stand here in the House and they have the gall not only to allow the motion to go through, which they could have stopped, but at the end of the day they applauded with the government. I say to the Liberals, you have to wear what you've done. You had an opportunity as the Liberal Party to determine and to show—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** When there are two of us standing up, one of us is out of order, and it's not me. The Chair recognizes the member for Windsor-St Clair on a point of order.

**Mr Duncan:** Mr Speaker, the Liberal caucus did not vote on first reading with the government. We do in fact support this legislation, but the member has alleged that I stood up and cheered when they dropped the ball, if you will. Neither myself nor any member of our caucus stood up at that point—

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order, because in this House we record things and Hansard looks after that. If you have made a mistake and you want to correct your own mistake, you may do so, but you cannot correct somebody else's.

The Chair recognizes the member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Bisson:** The record will show that the Liberals stood up and applauded. That's what the record shows. We have it on tape. We know what happened. You guys sided with the Tories. You had an opportunity to stand behind the workers and assist the situation. If the Liberals had supported us yesterday and had supported the workers, we would this afternoon have an agreement in the city of Toronto. We would have the workers going back to work. We would have ended up with the students in Toronto going back to school on Monday, without being forced by way of this draconian legislation, with a negotiated agreement, and probably in Windsor as well. But, no, you guys decided to do what you did. I've always understood where you come from.

The other point I want to make is a comment that was made by the member for Mississauga South, who said, "The funding formula is one of the things done by this government for the future of education." Wow, what a comment that was. I'll tell you, it impacts for sure on the future of education, but I would not be standing in this House and saying that's a good thing; I would say that's a bad thing.

The government has gone in and snatched \$1.5 billion out of education—

**Mr Kormos:** Million?

**Mr Bisson:** Billion. We're not talking millions; we're talking billions, beaucoup de zéros. They snatched \$1.5 billion out of education in order to pay for their tax cut. They scooped it out. Never mind what the effect is and the negative aspect it has on the education of our children; the bigger issue is it's created this crisis we find ourselves in today.

I think John Snobelen was right. In 1995, when John Snobelen was named as the Minister of Education and had that very famous conversation with bureaucrats and said, "We shall create a crisis in education in order to make the changes that we ideologically believe in," he knew what he was talking about. That's exactly what you're up to and that's what the funding formula does.

**Mr Kormos:** Promise made, promise kept.

**Mr Bisson:** Promise made, promise kept, as my good friend Peter Kormos points out. I really like having him here in the cheering section. He gives me some good lines every now and then.

I say Snobelen let the cat out of the bag back in 1995 because—

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to remind the member that we refer to other members of this chamber by their ridings and not by their names.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you very much. I always call him Pete outside of here. Sorry about that, Mr Speaker. The member from Niagara-Welland or whatever; somewhere

down where they grow grapes. Actually, a lot of my family live in your riding.

I think it was fairly clear what the government set out to do. It set out to create a crisis in education. It made the changes in funding by reducing the education budget by \$1.5 billion. They've gone over. They took total control of education by way of the Education Act and took away powers that boards had to deal with local issues when it comes to education. They created a funding formula—imagine this—that funds schools on square footage rather than on the number of pupils. What a move that was. I think the formula they've got is \$520 per square foot, if I remember correctly, to fund schools. If you crowd more kids into the school, the funding formula stays the same. So it means kids have a diluted amount of money to provide them with a decent education.

Again I would say that when the member for Mississauga South got up and said, "The funding formula is one of the things done by this government for the future of education," I think she was right—no question. You certainly did something that will affect the future of education, but I wouldn't stand in this House and crow and say that—

**Mr Kormos:** The future of private education.

**Mr Bisson:** That's where I'm going, exactly. I would not stand up in this House and crow about it being a good thing. We know where the government wants to go. It created the crisis. It's throwing the system in turmoil. Just as Mike Harris announced that he wants to go into the realm of running hospitals by the private sector—privatizing hospitals is what he said two days ago—I expect the crisis in education they created is the same as the crisis in health care that they created, in order to allow for the incursion of the private sector into the system of education, as well as health care. That's exactly where this government is going.

I say to the government across the way again—and I want to be very clear to the Minister of Labour—the legislation you set out quite frankly changes the process and the balance that existed in the past when it came to arbitration. It is beyond me why a Minister of Labour would want to appoint somebody as an arbitrator who we know has worked for the Toronto board already, in the case of Toronto, and is biased going into it. You want somebody who is independent in whom both sides can have confidence. You're not accepting that that is going to have an influence.

1620

The second thing is that your very legislation, by the way it reads and by the way it works, says that if the parties were to come to an agreement, as they did today, there is no ability for them to do so; they've got to sit back and wait for what the member from Perth said, the honourable deputy, deputy, Deputy Speaker—I just want to make sure I got the right amount of deputies in there—"I want a settlement, not an agreement." I think the cat is out of the bag. That's what the minister wants. He doesn't want the parties to come to an agreement. That's clear. They're like the Liberals: they want to be able to



kick at the workers any chance they get. That's what they're going to do. They want to impose that type of settlement on the workers.

I say as a New Democrat, darn right I'm proud to stand in this House today, call myself a New Democrat and show which side I'm on: on the side of the workers.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Let's understand there are a bunch of myths floating about this place with respect to what is on the table and what is not on the table. Let's be clear. At any time the two parties may enter into a collective agreement, that overrides any legislation. It overrides any legislation, any binding arbitration process. They always have the opportunity to negotiate a collective agreement, and that's not going to go away. They will always have that opportunity.

The second point that needs to be made is that there are only two methodologies to get the students back to school Monday morning and there are only two ways that can happen and be guaranteed to happen. One, obviously, is adopting this legislation that puts in place mechanisms to have the schools open on Monday, and if you don't have them open on Monday, by law there can be penalties applied. It can't be done under the particular agreement the member speaks about. So there is no guarantee that the schools will be open Monday other than the goodwill of the party executive, and we already know that the party executive president has said he will defy legislative order. So if he is prepared as a union leader to defy legislative order, which carries with it penalties under law, how much of a stretch would it be for him to say, "I defy an arbitrator's order," that has no penalty under law?

Use your heads, folks. Think about it. It doesn't make any sense, what you're arguing. If you want the schools to open Monday, which many people in Windsor and Toronto want, you either have to pass this legislation, guarantee they are open under penalty of law, or the parties negotiate a collective agreement, which they've been trying to do for five weeks before we got involved. Now, come on. Listen, it's a simple process.

If you're in favour of collective agreements, then get the two parties to sit down any time between now and whenever the arbitrator rules, in three or four months, negotiate yourself a collective agreement and all bets are off. Other than that, there's no guarantee the schools will be open on Monday.

**Mr Duncan:** I want to indicate that our party will continue to vote in favour of the legislation. The position the Minister of Labour has just put forward we concur with, that both parties can still reach an agreement at any time after the arbitrator is appointed.

There are two things I wanted to point out while I can respond. First of all, I have now been in touch with Windsor. I don't believe at this moment—and that could change—that anything is going to resolve there. Second, I have also spoken to the table, and short of entering into all kinds of problems, we can't possibly deal with the Windsor situation.

One of the members for the third party made the comment about their arbitration process under Bill 139—they will remember Bill 139—and is absolutely accurate: the minister's ability to appoint an arbitrator is a much different situation. What they forgot to say was that the arbitration panel that was appointed under that bill was subject to the Social Contract Act, an act which had stripped all collective agreements. I just reviewed the bill and, yes, you don't have that provision. What you had done was you had opened the collective agreement, stripped it and allowed them to go on strike.

I'm in favour of getting the children in my community and in Toronto back to school. I differ strenuously with the government on education. We will debate that in this Legislature. We will have an election. What is sad, and the final thing I want to say, is that that party made a deliberate decision to keep the kids in my city out of school, and then since yesterday they somehow expect us to be a party to their nonsense? Wrong. We will continue to vote for this bill. We'll debate education, and we'll debate it in this House and in the next election, but it's important to get the children of our working families back to school.

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to remind the members that they may have something they would like to say to someone else in the chamber, and if you do, I suggest that you walk over and sit down and talk to them. The yelling back and forth, in spite of the situation we're in here today, is not acceptable.

**Mr Martin:** I want to commend my colleague the member for Timmins-James Bay for putting on the record this afternoon some very thoughtful comments, some insightful comments on the circumstance we have here in front of us in the mad rush by this government to impose a set of conditions on negotiations that need to simply take their course. As I sit here and listen to my colleague and watch what's unfolding out there between the parties in dispute, both in Toronto and Windsor, I've come to the conclusion that there's either another agenda at play or there's just a total lack of understanding by the government as to what the process is, what it is the people at the table are trying to do, discussing with each other, trying to find an agreement, and where it is we all need to and want to go in this province.

We have a history, a very proud history, of labour negotiations in the province, that I would say probably stacks up against any other jurisdiction around the world in terms of people being reasonable and rational and sometimes taking a while, but working their way through some very difficult and thoughtful considerations as they come up with a set of agreements that will support them in the work they do for and with each other in the interests of the broader community and that will support them in their private lives as they try to look after themselves and their families and their children.

This afternoon we know that in Toronto there has been an agreement between the board and CUPE on arbitration. The government is not willing to recognize that and take the legislation off the table, and we're told now

that in Windsor SEIU have now taken an offer of settlement to their members. What else does this government want?

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** We heard very clearly from the Minister of Labour the actual facts when it comes to the rights under the collective bargaining opportunities, the arbitration opportunities that will still be afforded to the members of the union and to the Toronto District School Board. We've heard the facts from the author of the bill, and I think the spin being put on by the member in the third party is, to say the least, incorrect.

We're hardly surprised, though, and we keep entertaining the debate here today from a party that is so completely out of touch with what is happening in Toronto and Windsor and quite frankly all the province of Ontario. One hundred per cent of the phone calls I have received since this issue started said, "Get the kids back in the classroom," and it's not just 100% of the parents; it's 100% of the teachers who have called.

The fact of the matter is, the province gives resources to school boards. The school boards have an obligation to bargain in good faith, and so do the unions. If they truly believe in the rhetoric they keep spinning that they care about kids, then they've sure got a funny way of showing it, by forcing them out to the video arcades or out to rollerblade on the mall properties, because that's where they are today, and thank goodness it's a nice, sunny day.

The union is compromising the school year. Even the teachers themselves are demanding that the education of the kids must come first. The government has made it a high priority, second only to health, to make sure that we have the best-educated students and the best-educated populace generally. Incidents like this strike absolutely fly in the face of all the rhetoric that comes from the third party that they care too. If you cared, if you wanted to give the greatest possible stability to this process, let the debate end right now, let the public know that the kids will be back in the classroom on Wednesday, let the workers know they're going to be back on Monday morning. Let's get on with it and pass this bill.

1630

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The member for Timmins-James Bay has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Bisson:** Talk about hogwash, talk about double-speak, talk about it all. The member across the way, the member from the government and the minister say that it's necessary to have this legislation in order to get the children back to school and that, somehow or other, if we don't do that, it'll never happen.

Here are the facts: the board in Toronto and the workers have found a way to settle the strike. They agreed to go to work on Monday. They have a process set out that will get them a collective agreement in Toronto. In Windsor, the union is bringing an offer back to the workers for ratification today.

Then the member for Windsor gets up and says, "I don't think anything good's going on in Windsor, not to

my knowledge." I'd say you're out of touch. If we know here in Toronto what's happening between SEIU and the workers in Windsor and the board in Windsor, where have you been? You've got staff over there. Where's Wayne Lessard when we need him? That's what I have to say. What an abysmal excuse for a member. At least you should know that.

I say to the government across the way, I say to the Tories and I say to the minister: there are two negotiated settlements that have been made. Toronto is going back on Monday, they're bringing back an agreement to the workers in Windsor for ratification, and you say this legislation is necessary? You know why? Because this legislation says under section 13, "While this act is in force, the parties shall not appoint an arbitrator, mediator or mediator-arbitrator to settle matters in dispute between them relating to a bargaining unit otherwise than under this act"—and here's the kicker—"and anything done by a person so appointed has no effect." In other words, you want to be able to override all these agreements that we now have on the table, and you want to be able to do what the member for Perth says, to impose a settlement and not allow the parties to negotiate an agreement between them. I say shame on you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Martel:** I hope the minister doesn't leave, because I would like to start with where he left off. I've been sitting in the House all this afternoon, and I did take the time to listen very carefully to what the minister said. In his remarks to this Legislature, I clearly heard the minister say that the government didn't want to intervene in this process—and he nods his head, so that's clear. He also said that the government had to intervene because it appeared that there was no local solution coming forward in either Windsor or Toronto. He certainly left the impression—and maybe I'm wrong and the minister can stand up and clarify it, but I took his comments to mean that if a local solution had come forward or could come forward, then the government wouldn't be intervening. All right. He nods his head.

So let me start from there, because we now know two things during the course of the afternoon. That is, there is a settlement offer being brought back by SEIU to their members in Windsor today, which will no doubt lead to a collective agreement being signed today.

We also know that a letter has gone to the minister today, jointly signed by the employer—the Toronto District School Board—and the CUPE president, saying that they have agreed to an arbitration process, which will get us exactly where the government wanted to be.

If the minister truly meant what he said, then he would withdraw this bill, because we have two clear examples that a local solution has come forward even at this time. A local solution has come forward, agreed to by the parties involved, in the two communities where the disputes are taking place. The minister, if he meant what he said at all in here this afternoon, would withdraw this bill because the local solutions are going to have the children back in school by Monday.



What I take from what the minister said in response to comments made by my colleague from Timmins-James Bay and by the member from Scarborough is that in fact the minister really didn't mean what he said in the House today. He really didn't, in spite of the rhetoric, in spite of trying to put the government case, which is, "Oh, my goodness, we wouldn't be here today, we wouldn't be intervening, we wouldn't be ramming this draconian legislation down people's throats if a local solution had come forward." In fact he's not interested, even though there is a local solution in place in both of these communities right now.

You know what's even better? I understand the minister's staff are actually meeting with CUPE over the proposal that was jointly put forward by the Toronto District School Board and CUPE 4400, as we speak. As we deal with this legislation, there are representatives from the union here and they are meeting with the minister's staff to try to get him to agree to a proposal that the employees and the employer have put their names to.

We heard the minister in his reply to my colleague from Timmins-James Bay say, "We're not going to take that to the bank because there's no penalty here. We've already heard the president of the union say he's going to defy Bill 13. So we're not going to take this agreement to the bank, because there's no penalty that might stop him from doing just that if we withdrew the bill and allowed the agreement that was signed by the employer and the employees to move forward."

You know what I think? Frankly, I think that an agreement that was voluntarily entered into by CUPE and by the Toronto District School Board has much more chance of succeeding than anything that is rammed down their throats by this government. That's what I believe: that in good faith the union president and the representatives from the Toronto District School Board have entered into this agreement and that they have every intention of making it work in a timely fashion, as outlined in these papers that went forward to the minister. It's far more likely that something entered into voluntarily, where the parties sign in good faith, is going to succeed rather than something that is rammed down the throats of both the employer and the employees with the threats of fines and coercion and everything else hanging over everyone's head.

I dismiss the minister's comments because I think that's a really sad excuse for not accepting what is a legitimate agreement that would lead to a local solution that would put the kids back in school on Monday. I am left with the impression that the minister really didn't mean what he had to say in here about two hours ago. He didn't mean it all, and I regret that because there are people here, in good faith, this afternoon who have put this to the minister's staff, who have made clear what they intend to do.

Maybe it's worth reinforcing again what they intend to do, because I also heard some members in here earlier during the course of the debate trying to insinuate that if this agreement was accepted, the kids would not be back in school on Monday. So let me just repeat again what

the agreement says, the one that's been signed by the Toronto District School Board and the union.

It says, point 17, "The strike shall be terminated as of noon on the date of this order"—that's today—"and the employees shall return to work no later than April 30, 2001,"—which is Monday—"in accordance with their regular schedule. Employees required to return to work earlier in order to ensure the resumption of normal operations by 7 am on April 30, 2001, shall endeavour to do so beginning on the date of this order and shall be paid at the applicable rate." It also says that the parties shall comply with the return-to-work protocol that's set out in appendix 3, which lists how the employees will be brought back.

1640

So it's very clear that another government-backed excuse that I heard here this afternoon, that in fact "Only our legislation would guarantee that the children are back in school by Monday," is patently false. If the minister accepted this agreement, voluntarily entered into by the Toronto District School Board and the union, those children would be back at school Monday morning. We know in fact that the date that the order became effective would be today and the custodial staff would be in the schools tonight and tomorrow and Sunday, making sure that those children were back in the schools on time on Monday morning.

So that's the second argument that doesn't work. But because the government even raises that argument, I'm left with the impression again that the minister and his backbenchers didn't really mean what they said, what he said when he came here and opened his remarks today on Bill 13. It doesn't sound to me like he's terribly interested in accepting a local solution. Rather, it certainly appears that what he wants to do is have his way, enforce his will and ram Bill 13 down the throats of employers and employees here in Toronto and in Windsor.

If he didn't mean that, then he's going to come back into this House and he's going to say that his staff, yes, are still continuing to meet. He's going to confirm that because we know that's happening. And he's going to say that, well, in fact, he is prepared to look at a local solution because an agreement that's voluntarily entered into to end this is much better than coercing people back to work. That's going to poison the relationship in the workplace for a long time to come. He's going to come back here and he's going to say, "I meant what I said, and we are going to ensure that this local agreement will go into effect. Further, if," as we know is going on right now, "SEIU employees accept a settlement offer, we are going to withdraw this bill because there is absolutely no need for it, because local solutions voluntarily entered into have prevailed."

Surely that's what the minister wants if he meant what he said, and surely that would be so much better for the working relationship between the staff and the employers in those two communities.

You know, I want this bill withdrawn because I think that the provisions around arbitration are just so heavy-

handed and just completely defy what has been a long-standing, ongoing tradition of a fair arbitration process in this province. And we know that if the provisions of Bill 13 remain in effect, they will set a terrible precedent for any other piece of legislation that the government wants to bring in where arbitration will need to go into effect.

I know my colleague from Timmins-James Bay spent some time talking about the details of the arbitration process and how clearly they are changed from what has been half practice, half tradition. I want to just reinforce subsection (5), because he didn't note it in his comments, subsection 11(5) with respect to notice and consultation not required when an arbitrator is appointed.

The section says the following: "In appointing a replacement arbitrator, the minister may depart from any past practice concerning the appointment of arbitrators or chairs of arbitration boards, whether established before or after this act comes into force, without notice to or consultation with any employers or trade unions." That kind of consultation has been the past practice, and it's clear the government is using this bill to make the arbitration process even more heavy-handed than they already have with previous changes they have made to the process. The changes that were outlined by my colleagues and the reinforcement of section 5 make it really clear that we cannot accept this bill, not only because it defies the rights of employers and employees in two communities to come forward with a voluntary solution—which they have done—but it sets in place and in practice an arbitration process that we cannot live with, that is so flawed and so heavy-handed and such a departure from the natural rules of justice that we cannot accept it.

Even if this afternoon, after the discussions we know are ongoing right now between CUPE and the minister, the minister were to come in here and say he would like perhaps an exemption and would put that forward, and even if he was prepared to do something around the fact that we will probably have a collective agreement in Windsor before the end of the day and he might require some kind of amendment for that, I still wouldn't be voting for this bill and neither would any of us in the New Democratic Party, because the precedent it sets in place to undermine workers in the future in labour disputes is not acceptable—not now in the case of these disputes and not in the case of future disputes either.

I think this government should do the right thing and accept the agreement we know came forward this afternoon to the Honourable Chris Stockwell, signed jointly by the Toronto District School Board and CUPE, an order that was set in place by the mediator, Morton Mitchnick. I think the government should accept that as an appropriate local solution and let that arbitration stand. And the government should respond positively to what we think will come from SEIU this afternoon. But the government should go one step further and withdraw this draconian legislation.

There's one other point I want to make with respect to the arbitrator, and this stems from a question that was

raised in this House yesterday by my leader with respect to the particular mediator-arbitrator who has been appointed by this government and who will be appointed if this bill passes for the dispute involving the Toronto District School Board and CUPE. It says in section 11(2), "The mediator-arbitrator shall be Mr Stephen C. Raymond, vice-chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board."

I don't know Mr Stephen Raymond. I wouldn't know him if he walked in here. I have no idea what his decisions have been like at the Ontario Labour Relations Board. But what I do know is that it would be extremely difficult to categorize him as neutral, which was the point my leader was trying to make to Minister Stockwell yesterday. In fact, it would be impossible to describe him as neutral, as the person who will have to deal with the dispute between these two parties.

The reason is that Mr Raymond, as we discovered yesterday, did some very recent work for one of the parties, for the Toronto District School Board. He was involved in giving them direct advice about labour relations matters. He has the right to do that—we're not contesting that—and the Toronto District School Board has the right to hire him in that capacity. But because of that work, most recently done, no one could reasonably argue—no one could reasonably argue—that he is neutral, because he is not.

He has most recently represented the interests of one of the parties, whatever those interests may be. You cannot now go to the workers of that same employer to ask them to have any confidence in the work he will do. He has just recently represented their employer in labour relations matters. He's very well acquainted with the board and its policies. He's given them advice about it. He may have even given them advice with respect to the lead-up to this particular set of negotiations. So the union cannot and should not have any confidence in the alleged neutrality of this individual, as competent as he may be. We are not questioning that. But we are questioning a process that the minister has set up whereby he appoints a person who is not neutral. This is a person who has had a direct relationship and an interest in the affairs of one of the parties, and that has been most recent. So you cannot expect the Toronto District School Board employees nor members of this party to accept him as an arbitrator. He is not neutral, and he is not neutral because the perception clearly is he has had an interest. It has been a vested interest, because he has done work for, probably been paid for, hired by, one of the parties to this dispute.

**1650**

Not only do we find the technical changes that the government is ramming down our throats with respect to the arbitration process to be unacceptable, but as well we do not accept the appointment of the mediator the government would like to make, especially in the case of the Toronto District School Board and CUPE, because I can assure you, the employees who will be dramatically affected by his decision, if the government forces this bill down our throats, will have no confidence in his capacity



to act as a neutral party when investigating the details of this matter.

As my time winds down, I want to end with the following, and I go back to where I started, which was the minister. I sat and I listened and I heard this minister clearly say that the government made a decision to intervene only because nothing positive came through from the parties involved. I remind the minister as I close that we now have an agreement that has gone forward to this very minister, signed by the Toronto District School Board and CUPE, with respect to an arbitration process that has been voluntarily entered into by the parties, and he should accept it. If something similar comes from SEIU this afternoon and from that employer, he should accept it too. He should let those local processes work because success will be achieved, and then he should withdraw this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** I find myself in a very unusual position right now. I'm going to—I don't want to use the term "defend"—but I'm going to speak in support of the member for Windsor-St Clair.

**Mr Kormos:** We understand.

**Hon Mr Clark:** Perhaps if they actually listened, they might hear. The situation is that the member in Windsor is quite concerned about the students in his community and he wants them back in school. The opposition, the third party, would have everyone believe that he hasn't read the bill. They're stating that the parties down there have already come to a conclusion whereby it will be going to a final vote.

Well, the member for Windsor-St Clair, I would submit, has in fact read the bill, because the bill entertains that exact fact. Just as we did in Hamilton many months ago, we allowed in the bill the right for the union to go to a final offer vote, and we're allowing that process to happen. The same thing is happening in Windsor. So where they're trying to take slight with the member for Windsor-St Clair about what he is saying for his community, and where they're trying to imply to his community that he doesn't know what he's talking about and that he hasn't read the bill, quite clearly, he has read the bill.

The member for Nickel Belt, when she spoke of Stephen Raymond and his inability to be neutral, is leaving the clear implication that because he had worked with a previous employer some time in the past and had a position that he advocated for, it's impossible to change that position. I would submit that the former Premier of the province of Ontario, Bob Rae, vigorously opposed free trade, and yet he is now down south advocating for trade and working down there to sell trade. So clearly, one can be neutral and change positions.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** Je trouve regrettable qu'aujourd'hui nous sommes ici à débattre un projet de loi alors que tout aurait pu être réglé bien avant aujourd'hui. L'importance que nous débattons aujourd'hui, c'est le retour à l'école de tous nos élèves

des 500 et plus des écoles dans la région de Toronto ainsi que dans la région de Windsor.

Si on dit qu'on est sur le point d'en venir à une entente à l'appointement d'un médiateur, pourquoi ne l'avons-nous pas fait avant aujourd'hui? Je ne peux pas comprendre ça. Nous connaissons l'importance des rôles que ces personnes-là jouent dans une école. Ce sont les personnes sur lesquelles on doit dépendre pour la santé et la sécurité de nos élèves. Aujourd'hui, je regarde de temps à autre dans les journaux et on voit un peu que les vidanges, tout ça traîne, et que les souris seraient entrées. Mais encore là je crois que l'importance a toujours été que ces personnes-là qui ne sont pas au travail aujourd'hui retiennent nos enfants à la maison.

En plus de ça, les maux de tête que ça donne à tous les parents qui doivent se rendre au travail à tous les matins, puisque aujourd'hui on sait que la majorité des familles à faible revenu doivent toujours travailler pour leur jeune famille. Mais aujourd'hui on sait que, eux, ils doivent dépendre sur leurs deux revenus. Puis avec ce qui se passe aujourd'hui, si les personnes n'ont pas les bénéfices marginaux que nous connaissons dans le secteur public, bien, les personnes doivent prendre des congés, et c'est un revenu de moins dans la communauté sur lequel on doit dépendre pour le développement économique.

Mais encore une fois, je trouve ça regrettable. Si nous sommes sur le point d'en venir à une entente sur l'appointement d'un médiateur, qu'on le fasse le plus tôt possible, et puis on n'aura pas besoin de siéger plus tard aujourd'hui.

**Mr Hampton:** I want to just show the members of the Conservative caucus information that was sent to us today by the Service Employees International Union, local 210 from Windsor, which points out that they have accepted an offer and points out the terms that have been accepted.

The reason I want to do this is to go back again to why we're here. The Minister of Labour said that if solutions came forward from the local level, this legislation was unnecessary, that this legislation would have no place. Well, here are the terms of a collective agreement that have been negotiated between the Windsor separate school board and local 210 of the Service Employees International Union.

I have to ask, since they've accepted the collective agreement, they have agreed to hold a ratification vote, why are we here? What is it that the government is after? Let me tell you what I think the government is after. Let me tell you why we're here. We're here because this government has got some problems with their Reform Party/Alliance Party constituency. They haven't been hammering the teachers enough. They haven't been hammering the workers enough. So they're here to demonstrate to their right-wing constituents in this province that they're going to hammer those school secretaries, who have an income of \$25,000 a year, and they're going to hammer those school custodians, who have an income of less than \$25,000 a year. That's why we're here, so this big, tough, mean Conservative government can show

their right-wing constituency how they're going to put the boots to those workers. We don't need to be here. There is a collective agreement.

**Mr Stewart:** I've sat in this Legislature for I guess six years now and today I'm finally ashamed to be here to listen to this type of garbage and rhetoric over there. In the last hour I have not heard you mention the word "students" or "kids" once, not once in the last hour. Why don't you ask some of the kids? Why don't you ask the student who said, "I'm scared that I'm not going to be able to catch up in my work and it will cost me my year," or the one who said, "I'm feeling stressed out and beginning to panic because the strike is stretching into its fourth week," or the student who said, "I'm worried about this year and how my marks will be affected next year."

Do you know what this is all about for you folks? You don't care about the kids; you care about a couple of votes you're going to try to get, and you're not going to get them. You proved that in the last election. I would suggest that you start to concentrate on the kids.

I heard words from the member from Beaches—wherever—a little while ago about the passion she has. Why don't you have some passion for the kids, the kids who want to go back to school, the kids who should never have been out in the first place?

*Interjection.*

1700

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** I hear the member from Nickel Belt saying, "I don't know this man." Do you have to know him? Are you the one who has to give your approval, that only if you know him is he going to be smart enough to do this?

I said at the start that I'm ashamed to be in here today to listen to the type of garbage that has come out of this other party. I take back the word "garbage"—the rhetoric or whatever you want to call what they've been saying. You should be ashamed of yourselves. It's not about the kids and it darned well better be in the next few minutes.

**Mr Bisson:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: That was such an impassioned plea that I'd like to extend unanimous consent for two more minutes for the member who previously spoke; another two minutes, please.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there consent? There is no consent.

The member for Nickel Belt has two minutes to respond.

**Ms Martel:** If I might, I suggest that the member from Peterborough go back to sleep, because he hasn't heard a thing that has gone on here this afternoon. That was clear by his comments. My goodness, what a joke.

For this group to talk about children after the devastating report on child poverty released yesterday which said that one in three children in Toronto lives in poverty under your government—you should be embarrassed for that level of child poverty, because your government is directly responsible, with your stupid tax cuts. You've got a lot of nerve talking about children, because you would rather leave them in poverty, and we know it.

I want to let the folks who are watching know exactly the two agreements that have been submitted to the minister, because the minister has said that he would like the local agreements to come forward. Here are the two.

The letter from the Toronto District School Board and CUPE says the following:

"Dear Minister Stockwell:

"We enclose the order of mediator Morton Mitchnick which order constitutes the settlement of the parties in respect of the renewal of collective agreements between CUPE, local 4400 ... and the Toronto District School Board. This order provides for the termination of the strike and the return of employees to work on or before April 30, 2001,"—Monday.

"We respectfully request that the Toronto District School Board and CUPE, local 4400 be exempted from the provisions of Bill 13 currently before the ... assembly. We know that the government would have preferred that the parties reach their own resolution of their own disputes. This they have done."

Here's the letter from SEIU:

"In view of the pending legislation and the concerns of the committee surrounding that process ..."—that's today—

"The committee hereby accepts the board's final offer of April 18, 2001 ... ;

"The committee will bring this tentative ... agreement to its membership for immediate ratification as soon as reasonably possible;

"In the event of ratification by the membership we will be returning to work at the earliest possible date thereafter," which would be Monday.

Why are we here?

**The Acting Speaker:** I just wanted to say—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Some time ago, our forefathers decided that we would be better to debate than to yell out. I think it was a good idea, but even if I didn't, I'm here to observe the rules of the Chair. It is the Chair's symbolism that we respect to operate. You don't have the right or the privilege of speaking out and interrupting somebody else. We've designed a system of rotation. So if it's your rotation and it's your turn, then please feel free to stand up and say your piece like civilized members. If you don't, there is a remedy.

Further debate?

**Mr Marchese:** I was just at two press conferences, one held by the Toronto board of education, the other one by the union. Both of them, of course, were optimistic. Having come together to solve this issue, they both obviously hoped that the government would pay attention to that. Quite frankly, I thought the government would listen, because you've heard on a number of occasions Minister Stockwell and Mme Ecker say, "We of course want both parties to be able to solve this issue on their own. We don't want to intervene." They said the best result would be for the two parties to negotiate a settlement. That's what they want. Those were their stated intentions, so of course I believed them.



But the board and the union early this afternoon came to us and said, "Can you deliver these envelopes to the ministers?" They were hopeful and optimistic, having read the proposal. The two parties said, "We have agreed to binding arbitration, the agreement of which would bring children back to school on Monday," which is your stated interest, if your intentions are clear. You said, "We want to get kids back to school as early as possible." The settlement between the union and the board would have those children back to school on Monday.

Your bill overrides those agreements, overrides their good intentions, overrides the fact that those two parties have, on their own, said, "This is the way we want to settle it." Your bill says to them, "We don't care what you have done, the two parties that have a stake in this. We're going to impose on you our bill."

So what is it, government members? Do you really want those two parties to solve it, or do you want your own bill imposed on those two parties? I suggest to you, you want your own bill. Your own bill would leave those agreements open in terms of what those two parties have already negotiated. They've been negotiating for a long time and they have agreement on some of those matters and there's disagreement on others, and obviously that's what the binding arbitrator would deal with. Your bill says, "Uh-uh, everything is open and is on the table again."

So you see, I've got a problem with what you're doing. You've got to be clear, as often you are. I love your malevolence because I can see it visibly. But when you play these games, you confuse the public. Please be your malevolent selves once again. Tell them what you really think. Tell them what your stated intentions are versus your hidden intentions. That's what they want to know.

You also understand that in Windsor they have an agreement. The union has accepted the offer of the board. It's tentative. They're putting that to a vote. You understand, there is a solution that's coming. Your bill is unnecessary and now heavy-handed.

1710

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** I'm so glad you stood up, because now you're explaining it to me.

**Mr Marchese:** M. Wettlaufer, that was my hope, that in exfoliating your bad onion of a bill you would of course be clarified by it and would obviously change your mind. You've got to go talk to Mr Stockwell. You've got to go talk to your minister and say, "Look, they've negotiated a deal." The board said at the press conference, "This is our agreement. It is not an agreement forced upon us by the province, but ours." It makes sense.

You understand, M. Wettlaufer, that if these two parties are agreed on a process, they will feel good, and better if you allow them to do that versus if you impose it upon them. If you're imposing it, they're going to be as angry as hell once again. I've got to tell you, M. Wettlaufer, that the workers are not going to go back on the weekend to clean those schools, whether you give them

time and a half or double time or triple time. They're so angry and poisoned by your lack of funding to school boards that's making it very difficult at the board to free up some money, so they argue, that they can't come to a fair negotiated agreement. They're so angry and poisoned by what you have done already with your funding formula that's inadequate that to then impose Bill 13 on them makes it doubly worse.

Windsor has a solution at hand, Toronto has proposed a solution before you, and you're saying, "The document is too long. We can't consider it," because presumably you don't have the time and/or the skills or the hired, paid lawyers—highly paid, I would argue—to solve this issue within a matter of minutes. Your other stated argument is, "It's been handed to us a bit too late. Sorry." It doesn't appear like it's a two-late proposition for you to be able to consider a document that says to you, "We have a proposed solution."

I'm trying to understand the objectives of this government at this stage, trying to understand your motives as to why it is you refuse to allow them to solve it on their own. Your bill overrides what they're doing. While your bill permits them, within seven days, to negotiate an agreement, I'm saying to you that it's pretty damn difficult, if they haven't been able to negotiate this, that they might be able to solve it without binding arbitration. Although it is malodorous to the union to accept binding arbitration, they have decided it is a better thing to do than to accept your bill, and it's a far better thing that you allow them to do this on their own. If the board and the union are telling you, "Leave us alone. We have a solution," I say to you leave them alone to solve it.

Mr Stockwell, thank you for appearing. You've got to let me know in your two minutes what it is about you that makes it impossible to deal with this. I'm beginning to feel that you're growing feathers, and that I have not seen a peacock spread its feathers as much as you in the last—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** Please. The feathers are just shooting right out. Pretty soon you'll be able to fly, for God's sake. Come on, come down to plain old earth and deal with people in a mano-a-mano kind of situation.

**Mr Kormos:** How high do peacocks fly?

**Mr Marchese:** The feathers spread up real high and it makes a real effort, obviously, to fly. But you understand the concept.

**Mr Kormos:** But then you get too close to the sun.

**Mr Marchese:** That's a different story. That's another mythology.

But, Stockwell, I am pleading with you. Chris, pay attention. I'm pleading with you. Chris? Speaker, I'm pleading with the Minister of Labour. I understand, a Minister of Labour—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would just remind you that you don't refer to members by their names.

**Mr Marchese:** You're quite right, Mr Speaker. I corrected myself, you saw, promptly.

Minister, what is it about this agreement in Windsor and Toronto that you don't like? Just a simple answer: "We don't like it because—"

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Sorry, monsieur le ministre? I couldn't hear you. What is it that you don't like about this agreement?

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** You better be careful or he'll start imitating you.

**Mr Marchese:** No, but I love it when he does it because his eyes bulge out when he does that and I like to see—

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Could I have the rest of Mr Marchese's time by unanimous consent so I can respond to some of his questions.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there consent? No.

**Mr Marchese:** But, monsieur le ministre, you've got two minutes to rebut, please. Give us the time. We have so little time, as you know, and you have so much time. Look at all the members that can debate this bill. By the way, write down the answers to the others so they can pass them on to me.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** No, no. I'll ask it again. What is it about this agreement reached by the board and the union in Toronto, and the agreement that you must have heard in Windsor, because you've got a lot of workers there working for you—obviously the union has accepted the offer of the board—tentative, right?—and it'll be put to a ratification board, I understand. But they're solving it, so—

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** But I don't like it.

**Mr Marchese:** But you don't like it. But when you have your two minutes—I'm just giving your time to reflect, right? I've got another nine minutes.

I've got to tell you, Chris, the workers are really angry. You understand that for people earning—Minister of Labour, you understand these workers are not making a lot of money. Many of them make less than \$30,000. In fact, most of them earn less than \$30,000 a year, so for these people to be out for four weeks shows incredible determination, incredible anger against this government and against the Toronto board—I've got to tell you, against both parties. That they should stay out so long shows that people feel so strongly about wanting a fair deal that, until they get it, they won't be happy. Your bill will make them unhappier and angrier than ever against you and against the board. These are the people who don't make a lot of money, the non-teaching staff.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** They were exempted. They were under \$30,000.

**Mr Marchese:** Don't engage the—we've got other things to talk about.

When we say to you that non-teaching personnel are important people in the educational system, we know that. We understand that, while you've kept them away from the funding formula, because the only thing you fund under your formula is, of course, classroom education, teaching. The others don't count in the funding formula. It is for that reason that we have hundreds of fewer caretakers in the system and that's why it's so dirty. I play soccer from time to time in some of these

gyms and I have to tell you, they are dirtier than ever. There are not enough caretakers.

Boards have 20% fewer librarians now than they did before. That's a lot fewer librarians. You understand, librarians are a key component of learning. They're an integral part of teaching, yet they're not counted as teaching staff. They're non-classroom.

Special ed: They have suffered so many cuts under you. Educational assistants have been fired, secretaries have been let go. You understand that all these people are an integral part of the educational system. They matter. They count. They know they count, and you know who knows? The parents and the young men and women of those schools know how important they are to their day-to-day lives and to the quality of education. They know that, yet you people have devised a wonderful way to take money away from that sector—the non-classroom funding sector—the social workers, the librarians, the music teachers, the caretakers, the ESL instructors, the continuing education people. So many of these people, for you, don't count, in such a way that you've been able to take money out of that sector, of course allowing you to say, "We haven't touched classroom funding." So while you may have maintained classroom funding, generally speaking you have devastated the other sector, which includes these people who have been on strike for the last four weeks.

1720

You are telling them you don't value their work. You are telling them they don't literally belong in the educational system. Of course you will argue, "That's not true. Of course we value them." But you don't. You don't value them, because thousands of these people, these non-classroom teachers, have been fired, and you're making the quality of life in that system a terrible, terrible thing.

Not only have you assaulted teachers, not only are they demoralized by Bill 74 in particular, which forced them to teach longer and which threatened them with having to take on extracurricular activities as an obligation, as a matter of duty, which you have left suspended and which you threaten to use, and mercifully you haven't, you have left trustees without any power. I'm not sure why trustees are still there doing your dirty work. They no longer have any power to do anything. If I were a trustee I would be quitting that job because there is nothing left to do except your dirty work, and I wouldn't do it.

I said to the Toronto board—when we were trustees there the trustees of that board fought every government, Conservative, Liberal and when we were in power they fought us as well—"I expect you, board, to do the same thing with this government, particularly when they have taken all of your power away and when they have only given you a remuneration that's \$5,000."

**Ms Martel:** Some of the trustees are.

**Mr Marchese:** Of course. As you know, there were five trustees who signed a letter that disagreed with the direction of where this board is going, and I am no fan of



Marguerite Jackson, one of your appointees, the director of the Toronto District School Board, who seems to be doing all of your dirty work. It seems she has found enough trustees who are like-minded Conservative to do your dirty work, and God bless that there have been five people, at least, who are able to defy their board and to defy you publicly. What we needed to have was more of them. We need more of them who are able to put principles ahead of a funding formula that's devastating our system.

How can you take \$1.5 billion away and say, "We are giving them more"? Hydro has gone up in the Toronto education system by \$17 million. This government has given them \$6.5 million. That means they're short \$11.5 million. It means that the money has to come out of operating funds to deal with that problem that of course was not expected. So the government says, "We have given them money to deal with these extraordinary expenses." But, I'm sorry, \$6.5 million doesn't deal with it. It means they have to find \$10.5 million more from operating dollars. Do you understand that? There isn't a whole lot of money to go around. Eighty per cent of boards' budgets go to staff, to teachers, mostly, and the rest, the 20%, doesn't go far enough to deal with everything else that boards have to do. It simply doesn't. So when you say, "We're giving boards more money," sorry, \$6.5 million, just as an example, to deal with hydro is a shortfall of \$10.5 million.

I add, you have collected 18 million bucks. Every day that they are on strike, Stockwell collects \$1 million. Each day the strikers are out, \$1 million comes into the pockets of this government—\$18 million so far that goes to this government. There isn't much difference between where the board and the unions are. I think five million bucks would have solved it. Five million bucks probably would have solved it and, Stockwell, \$1 million a day comes into your pocket.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** What?

**Mr Marchese:** Why are you in consternation, Stockwell? I'm telling you—I don't know. I thought I had been telling you for the last three days, and you're telling me in consternation, "What?" A million a day. Every time they're on strike, you collect it, and it's now a collective 18 million bucks. Five million probably would have solved it, and you refused to send it back so could they could have solved it a long time ago.

With his usual disdain and peacockery, he dismisses the rest of us. He dismisses us, dismisses the workers, dismisses the board, dismisses the teachers, teaching and non-teaching, dismisses the entire world except themselves.

Stockwell, you still have time. I hope you can reconsider your lack of wanting to have these other parties solve it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I'm trying to get something straight here. The member for Trinity-Spadina says that because there is a tentative deal we should withdraw this legislation.

I find that very difficult to understand, because I have in front of me the copy of a letter from Local 210 SEIU of Windsor to barrister and solicitor Paul Mullins. The third item in the letter says, "In the event of ratification by the membership we will be returning to work at the earliest possible date thereafter." We don't know if it's going to be ratified, and what is "the earliest possible date thereafter"? This legislation proposes to get the students back into the classroom on Monday.

In this morning's Toronto Sun there are eight students from Toronto quoted, and one of these students says, "I have no sympathy for the strikers' demands for extra money because they're not highly skilled people and can be replaced." That's Bo Henderson, age 15, of Riverdale Collegiate. Another student says, "I'm severely stressed out. I'm scared that I'm not going to be able to catch up on my work and it will cost me my year." That's Lindsey McMartin, 15, East York Collegiate.

Another student says, "I have to look after a younger brother at home.... I'm feeling stressed out and beginning to panic now that the strike has stretched into its fourth week." That's Melissa Hanlon from East York Collegiate. Another student says, "I'm feeling uneasy because I'm fast-tracking and really need the extra credits. I've been looking over my notes and hope the teachers can speed us through the work when we get back." That's Anna Shao, age 16, from A.Y. Jackson Secondary School.

There are four other students who are quoted with similar comments. They are concerned that their year is going to be lost if they're not back into the schoolroom very, very quickly. Another student, Augustine Lim, says, "I'm worried about this year and how my marks will be affected next year." He's age 16, A.Y. Jackson Secondary School.

That is why it's so very important for this legislation to be passed and we can get the students back in school on Monday.

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** I realize that this debate arouses a lot of passions and it's very difficult; however, to listen to some of the things I've heard coming from the third party—I was monitoring this debate. I heard the member for Trinity-Spadina talk about the director of education in the city of Toronto and make some very disparaging remarks. I must tell you that that is entirely inappropriate. You can make partisan comments in this chamber, where people can defend themselves, but to be able to sink to that level to do that shows a lack of class. Frankly, I think that member should be ashamed of himself, should withdraw his remarks. I think the other member, from Sudbury East, should also withdraw her remarks about the arbitrator, a very fine individual with an impeccable reputation.

To be able to make the kind of remarks they're making—I can appreciate that they may disagree with the direction of the government, with the legislation. They're entitled to speak about whatever they want. But when members of this chamber abuse the privileges that we have to speak, to talk about individuals who cannot

defend themselves, really, in my opinion, they have crossed the line.

The members of the third party are showing, really, their true colours: a very heady and vindictive group of people. I can tell you that these folks, if they truly had any class, any dignity, any respect at all, would withdraw the remarks they have made in this chamber. They would show this place the kind of dignity it deserves. I am gravely offended at what I have heard today from two members, and I'm certain I'll hear from other members because I haven't heard some of the other ones, but some of the comments will not surprise me.

1730

**Mr Martin:** I want to commend the member for Trinity-Spadina for his wonderful comments here this afternoon. He is a speaker who always speaks with passion and also understands the issues to which he speaks.

I particularly appreciate the reference he made to the excellent work done by the CUPE workers with the Toronto school board and the level of professionalism in that work. I think it's important for us to recognize who some of these people are, in juxtaposition to the presentation made by the member from Kitchener Centre, who suggested, by reading from the Toronto Sun, that somehow these workers were less than professional or weren't worthy of their pay.

The custodians and secretaries in schools across this city and province are wonderful men and women. As a matter of fact, my mother and father, immigrants to this country, were custodians, brought up seven children and worked very hard all their lives. They were the first people into the school in the morning, to make sure that school was warm and clean for those students when they arrived. When a child arrived with perhaps no lunch or not having had breakfast, they would recognize them right away, bring them into their room and share their sandwiches with them. They were the people who fixed the heating system in the middle of winter when it broke down; who went up on the roof to get a ball when the kids threw it too far, to get it back and return it to those children; the people the principal called on to perhaps take somebody home because the parents weren't able to come and pick up a child who was sick in that school.

These are the kind of people we're talking about here in terms of this negotiation process. These are the kind of people, referenced by some of these students—

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

**Mr Tascona:** I just want to comment on the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board negotiations. It's obvious that what has happened there fits very nicely in with how the act works, because what they have basically accomplished here is a tentative collective agreement, subject to ratification. What we don't know is when this is going to be ratified or if it is going to be ratified. The fact remains that the focus of our legislation is that the strike ends when the act is in force.

Secondly, section 11 works to complement what's happening in Windsor. Section 11 states, "If the parties

have not executed a new collective agreement on or before the seventh day after this act comes into force," the mediator process comes into play. So they have a seven-day window to make sure that what they're doing right now happens.

It also states under subsection 10(3), "If the parties execute a new collective agreement before a mediator-arbitrator is appointed under this act, no mediator-arbitrator shall be appointed." So the fact is, if they get their agreement, which is tentative right now, ratified during that seven-day window, they have themselves a collective agreement to which this legislation doesn't apply. But the fact does remain that they have not ended the process of free collective bargaining which this act allows, so the seven-day window.

The kids go back to school when this act comes into force, and the process which is envisioned and obviously is well along the way in Windsor can be completed within the seven days when this act comes into force, and there will not be a mediator-arbitrator process, which is envisioned under the act. So it's a win-win for both sides: free collective bargaining and the students go back right away.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Trinity-Spadina has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Marchese:** First, to the member from Kitchener Centre: he read some quote from some individual who was quoted in the Toronto Sun who says, "I have no respect for those people asking for more money because they are unskilled." I've got to tell you, by inference, or at least by implication, you are in full agreement; otherwise you would not have read it out. How can you people, anyone in this Legislature, read such a quote that implicitly, if not explicitly, agrees with such a comment?

These people are working people. They do decent work. They do work that we depend on and that everybody in the school system depends on. How could you say they shouldn't be asking for more because they're unskilled? Does that mean you shouldn't deserve more because you are unskilled? Maybe we should have a scale here, because some of us perhaps shouldn't be getting our wage of \$78,000 a year, on the basis of skill. I've got to tell you, a whole lot of us would be demoted to who knows what. Please.

To the Liberal from Don Valley East, good God, you remember this morning Kennedy said they have to support this bill, regrettably, and too bad the NDP couldn't find a solution. Their solution is to support you folks. Then he complains about us complaining about Marguerite Jackson, who is on your side. I'm sorry. Marguerite Jackson is on your side, your appointee, and is doing your dirty work.

This member here says that the arbitrator he is agreeing to in your bill is OK, is a fine person. That may be, but I'm telling you that the union and board need to agree on that arbitrator. That's fairness. It's fundamental in terms of what should happen. You shouldn't appoint the arbitrator. The two sides need to. So if the Liberals support you, God bless them, and make them clear—



**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Ms Churley:** I want to start by reading a letter I received. I'm just going to say the first name because I didn't get permission, although I think she'd be fine with me giving her full name. It's one of the many letters I have received from those on the front lines, from their children and from them, thanking the NDP, the only party that stood shoulder to shoulder with these workers who are on strike, the only party in this House that stood with them and stood up for them and continues to stand up and speak up for them. We've received many letters and many phone calls supporting us in the stand we took in this House, and they continue to do so.

I'm going to read a letter to you, and I want everybody to listen. When you over there stand up and point your fingers at this party and say, "You don't care about the kids," we care about the kids. Let me tell you something: we care about the children of these workers we're talking about here today. These workers make, in some cases, under \$20,000 and \$25,000 and have children to support, have food to put on the table to feed those children. We care about those kids too. I can assure you that a lot of parents out there, even with all the strife and difficulties they've been under during this strike, understand that it's your government that caused the mess we're in today and are willing to put up with this to help the people who are out on strike, because they know exactly who caused this problem.

John Snobelen stood up in this House when he first became Minister of Education and said, "We have to create a crisis. We have to cut money from the budget, so let's create a crisis." Ever since that day, we have seen nothing but strife and work-to-rule and problems in the schools by the actions of this government, because of the over \$1 billion—what is it?—the \$1.8 billion or \$1.5 billion you have taken out of our education system. That's where it all started.

Now let me read this letter, and let me hope that these people will stop this nonsense and listen. The letter says:

"I am writing you on behalf of my mother and the other CUPE members, because they have my support and I'm asking that they have yours as well. My mother is an ESL instructor. She's been teaching adults for over eight years, both day and night, and she loves her job. She loves her students and is such a dedicated teacher (having made herself available to her students around the clock for absolutely everything, whether it be school-related)—this is a real person, guys; I'm reading a letter from a real person—"a personal crisis, or just to practise speaking their new language). Shouldn't teachers like my mother be recognized for the wonderful and important jobs they do? These people need to receive the recognition that they deserve. Without it, people like my mother will feel hopeless and underappreciated, though I know that no matter what happens, that my mother's job performance will never suffer, which makes me so proud. I can only hope that everyone is as enthusiastic about their jobs the way my mother is. This strike is humiliating her, but she believes in fairness, so she has walked the line every day

since the strike began, the same way she did two years ago. Please know how important this is. A settlement must be reached so that these people know that they have your support and they continue doing their jobs with their heads held high and proud."

It is signed, "Sincerely, Amanda."

1740

Amanda is representative of many people I have heard from. Let's put this in perspective here. We get up and we talk and there is the rhetoric across the floor back and forth. You talk about, "You don't care about the kids," and somebody else, "You don't care about the kids." We all care about the kids. But let's face it here—

*Interjections.*

**Ms Churley:** You know what? I would say to the members opposite, let me remind them again—I am speaking for Toronto here right now. I don't know. I just recently asked the minister if the CUPE members are still in his office meeting with staff to try to get an agreement to a proposal that both sides agreed to, a local solution that the minister said he wanted. But the minister said he won't withdraw the bill because there's no penalty involved, I believe. As my colleague said before, they are willingly signing this in good faith.

You have a choice right here and now. I do not understand why we are still sitting here. I do not understand why Liberal members aren't up and taking up some time speaking to this. I am hopeful, because we all know that in these situations a local solution is the best solution. The NDP would not support the back-to-work legislation. It has draconian clauses in it around the arbitration, but besides that we believe it's of the utmost importance for the dignity of these workers we're talking about here that they reach a local solution so that, as this letter said, these workers can go back to work with their heads held high.

They don't seem to get it how important this is within our schools. The strike has been going on ever since this government came to power. The workers and the teachers are all demoralized. If you go into schools in your ridings, you will see that. They're all demoralized. We've got principals doing the work of caretakers because there are not enough of them. We have principals and others cleaning toilets because there aren't enough workers.

We all know what will happen. I recently went to a school in my riding and saw first hand the impact that the cuts you've made over the past several years is having in our schools and on the kids you're talking about caring about. We see what's happening in the schools. So don't you point your finger at me and tell me I don't care about kids. I have been fighting for the kids in the schools in my riding and across this province every day since you guys came into power, created the crisis and started the turmoil that's been in our schools ever since. That is what we're doing today.

Just think back for a moment. I think we all know, every party here would know, that when workers are legislated back to work before they've had a reasonable time to work out a local solution, yes, even in schools, they will go back. Margaret, you would know this.

**Mrs Marland:** A reasonable time? Four weeks?

**Ms Churley:** Schools have not been closed in Toronto for four weeks. They haven't been closed very long at all.

**Ms Martel:** Just one week.

**Ms Churley:** They've been closed for a week. We know there have been parents who've been really inconvenienced, certainly parents of special education classes. We know all that. But what is going to happen? If you get your legislation through today, do you really think it's going to resolve the problem? It isn't. That's why I feel sorry for the parents, and I understand many of them wanting this legislation to be passed. But we all know what's going to happen if these workers are legislated back by you guys, with the support of the Liberals here, so quickly. Now they're so close, in fact, to reaching agreement. Just think how bitter people are going to be. Think about what it's going to be like when they go back in the school, having been legislated back and not having the opportunity to work out a local solution. It's not going to solve the problem. There'll be chaos in the schools. It will continue. It is the truth.

*Interjections.*

**Ms Churley:** They groan, they moan over there. They don't face the truth. This is a quick fix to please your friends and you think it's going to make everybody happy, but it isn't. Many of the parents I talk to are aware that their kids are going to go back to school and the problems won't be resolved.

You delivered on your promise to create a crisis in education. Mr Snobelen is here—I forget his ministry now; natural resources, I believe—the Minister of Natural Resources, and he set the stage for this. Here we are, several years later, day after day, every year since this party has been in government. We have an unprecedented strike and problems in our schools. You should know that.

I would like an update from the Minister of Labour. I don't know if perhaps at the end of my speech we could ask for unanimous consent to get an update, to find out how things are moving along. If there is an opportunity, I'm sure the minister would agree, because didn't he say early on that he would prefer a local solution? Well, if the minister is sincere about that, I would assume his caucus is sincere about that. I would assume that the Liberals, although they're supporting this draconian legislation before us today, would prefer a local solution, if that could be found. I would assume that people would be willing to recess for as long as possible if there were a possibility for local solutions to be found.

This is not just about whether or not I support back-to-work legislation or whether or not I support the draconian aspects of this back-to-work legislation, which I categorically don't. But it's true what this really is all about is the kids who have to go back in that classroom. What is just amazing me about this situation and why the minister won't accept the agreement that has been supported by both parties in Toronto, by CUPE and by the board, a proposal supported by both sides, is that the kids would be back in school earlier. The custodians would be in

there this weekend, cleaning up so the kids could go back to school on Monday. I guess the minister wants to use the heavy hand. He says that he's afraid, because there's no penalty in there, I suppose, that it'll all fall apart. But, my God, these people are negotiating in good faith and are willing to sign this agreement in good faith, and the kids will be back in school earlier. That's what gets me about this argument.

**Ms Lankin:** There is no agreement.

**Ms Churley:** OK. So—

**Mr Duncan:** There's no agreement in Windsor.

1750

**Ms Churley:** Yes, we just heard that. There's no agreement in Windsor at this point. We just found that out. I presume that people are still working on it and trying to come to an agreement.

What I'm hearing is that people are at the table working very hard to come to agreements here. I think it would be incumbent upon this government, now that they know that the parties in both the city of Toronto and Windsor are working hard to try to come to agreements, that the agreements they come to in good faith should be enough to withdraw this legislation today.

I will be asking the minister to update us as to what's happening, if he has any further information, because I'm taking in good faith that he meant what he said earlier, that he would prefer local solutions.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** You've been yapping on this for an hour and you want me now to update you?

**Ms Churley:** Yes, when I'm finished speaking here.

This bill is an assault on the workers' rights. The people I read the letter from, the daughter of the ESL—

**Mr Caplan:** Why don't you talk about the social contract?

**Ms Churley:** Would you be quiet? I'm trying to speak here. That's a Liberal, to those who might be watching, who are supporting the government's back-to-work legislation today, supporting ramming it through even though they know that here in Toronto there's an agreement that both parties are supporting and kids can be back in school by Monday. They prefer to have this heavy-handed legislation, with the draconian aspects of it, passed here today.

But what we're talking about here is the fact that it is an assault on these workers' rights. I want to bring this back again to the fact that we're talking about real people here. Again, I say, people throw out, "Oh, don't you care about the kids?" Don't you care about the workers? Don't you have any compassion for them at all? Don't you have any understanding about the importance of their work in our schools? Why don't you do what the NDP suggested and take that money that you've been able to collect since the workers have been on strike—how much is it in Toronto? Is it \$14 million, \$15 million? Take it and give it to the board. Don't pocket that money. You have no right to pocket that money. There are solutions here which you're ignoring. That's what amazes me. It seems to me that any responsible government of any stripe would make every attempt to get a local solution



and not have to bring in draconian back-to-work legislation.

This government, this Minister of Labour has not taken our advice, has not even looked at the possibility of taking that money that has been collected—what are you going to do with it? Put it in general revenue now after taking over \$1 billion out of the Ministry of Education? Have you sat down at the table and said, “We’ve got this money, and we know you’re getting close to reaching an agreement, so let’s put that money on the table and see if we can reach an agreement?”

This is a really sad day in this Legislature. It’s a really sad day. I think we would all agree with that. Perhaps I shouldn’t say this, but I’d like to think, at bottom, everybody here cares about the kids. But I have to doubt that when the Tories and the Liberals stand up and say, “We have no choice, we have no options; we have to bring in this back-to-work legislation,” when they know that local agreements are possible.

What we want to do here is this: we want to ensure that if the parties cannot reach a negotiated settlement in the narrow time frame allowed, if you choose to prefer to go on with this bill, the dispute will be resolved by a recognized arbitrator who enjoys the respect and the confidence of both the school boards and the union. This could be done by amending the bill to allow the parties to select an arbitrator agreeable to both sides. Is that too much to ask? That’s the way it has been done in the past.

We want to require the minister to choose from a list of recognized arbitrators in the province of Ontario. That too has been the practice in the past. That’s not too much to ask. That is fair and reasonable. Remove the stipulation allowing the minister to impose an arbitrator with absolutely no experience whatsoever in resolving labour disputes. Why in God’s name is that in there? Remove it. Is that too much to ask?

Untie the hands of the arbitrator and allow for a genuine solution by removing the absolute bar against an award which imposes even a temporary deficit on either school board—this is crazy—and give the arbitrator the flexibility needed to fashion a meaningful settlement by removing the unnecessary requirement that they must show in writing how the board or boards would meet the cost of the award without incurring a deficit.

These are serious and reasonable suggestions here. The minister is waving me off—

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Because you don’t know what you’re talking about. You’ve been yapping at me for an hour.

**Ms Churley:** I certainly do know what I’m talking about, and that’s the problem with this government: the arrogance that they think they know it all. The suggestions we are making here, Minister of Labour, are not new. They have been in previous legislation, and it makes sense to amend this, if you’re going to go through with legislation, to at least make it fair and reasonable.

What I’m talking about here—

*Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** You are so arrogant. Yes, we’re talking about the kids, and I think I’m trying to work with you to find a solution here, not the draconian solution that you put before us today. We’re not trying to frustrate the process here, but in the event that a negotiated solution isn’t reached, that’s what we want to do, Minister of Labour.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** As I stand for the first time to respond in this House—

*Applause.*

**Mr Miller:** Thank you—and at the end of my first long week in this House—I hope it’s close to the end of a long week—I see there’s a lot of theatre that goes on in this place.

The member for Toronto-Danforth was talking about letters thanking the NDP to do with this issue. I have received numerous letters from my constituents on the same issue and I’ll read one of them.

“To Norm Miller, MPP for Parry Sound-Muskoka:

“As a concerned parent ... I am appealing to you for help in resolving the current labour dispute which has closed the schools of the Near North District School Board.” This is of course a similar dispute but to do with the near north, which has now been resolved. “The victims are our children who have currently lost three weeks of school. Being told that no child in Parry Sound district has ever lost his or her year because of a strike is of little consolation. The time they lost was not made up....”

This is a very different perspective from that being offered by the third party.

“Please petition the Premier and government to immediately take steps to legislate the strikers back to work and save our children from further harm. I also ask that you further petition the Premier and government to designate education as an essential service thereby preventing further disruptions to our children’s education....”

I’ve received hundreds of letters like this in my first month.

“As our elected representative we ask you to take a strong stand on behalf of our children. Help bring the strike to an end and get our children back into the classroom.”

I think what’s happening today is legislation that will end the strike and get the kids back into school on Monday, which is of utmost importance. If we don’t do this, it may not happen.

**Mr Duncan:** One of my colleagues in the NDP earlier today indicated that he thought I was a miserable excuse as a member. I want to inform the House that through the course of these discussions I have been actively discussing the situation with both sides in the Windsor dispute. I have now satisfied myself, as recently as 20 minutes ago, that there will not be a settlement in Windsor today. I believe there won’t be a settlement reached by the two parties, as I indicated at the beginning of the day. I spoke recently, this past weekend, with both sides and urged them to agree to an order of arbitrator prior to the government doing this, and at that time they didn’t agree. I’ve tried to maintain a discreet, low-level presence. I

think the minister will inform the House as well that I've kept him abreast of what I've known in these discussions throughout.

**1800**

The Windsor strike is now in its 25th day. Our children have been rotated in and out in the last week or so. I just want to read a comment from Hansard about when kids should be back in school. It says here, "The strike in Windsor is in its 26th day. The ERC has not advised that the school year is in jeopardy. In fact, yesterday the commission reported to me, 'There is no convincing evidence of jeopardy to the courses of study at this point in time.'" The NDP House leader, Mr Dave Cooke, said that. He had actually been advised that there was no jeopardy. Here's how he concluded, "Nevertheless, the government feels the action must be taken to ensure that the strike does not continue ... " That was on day 26. We are on day 25. That was Dave Cooke, member of the NDP government.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** How long did it take them to get it passed?

**Mr Duncan:** They got it passed, I believe, in one day, as I recall.

I can't speak with the same authority as some of my colleagues on the Toronto situation. I can say that I'm going to vote for this legislation and we will debate education with the government at another time, once the kids are back in school.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Bisson:** I want to comment on the passionate plea that the member from Riverdale—or Toronto-Danforth as it is now—made in the Legislature in regard to trying to plead with the government that if they're going to pass this legislation, to put provisos in the legislation that at least give an opportunity for a bit of fairness.

All we're asking for on this side of the House, within the New Democratic Party, is that if you're going to pass this back-to-work legislation, at the very least put in the legislation that both parties must agree to the arbitrator. I don't think that's an unreasonable request that we're making of the government. We're saying there has to be confidence on both sides. If a settlement is to be reached that is at least mutually acceptable, to a degree, you would have to hope that at least both sides agree on the arbitrator.

The government, by way of their legislation, is saying they can pick an arbitrator. They can pick a person who has no experience. They don't have to worry if the person is in a conflict situation. The arbitrator may or may not have worked for the school board or the union. There's all kinds of stuff in here that gives the government the ability to pick an arbitrator who may not have the best interests of one party or the other in mind when coming to an agreement.

We're saying we would, first of all, rather see a negotiated settlement, as has been the case in Toronto. We know that kids could go back to school Monday if the government was to withdraw this legislation. Regardless of the legislation, people can go back to work. We're

saying, at the very least, if you're going to go forward with legislation, we still wouldn't support it, but at least put something in here that gives a degree of fairness.

The other point I want to make is that she made a point about the issue of poverty. This government talks about caring for children when, on the heels of the report that was issued by Campaign 2000, the very people who were charged by the federal government to look at child poverty in this country came back and said that children are worse off now in this province under Mike Harris than they were before. In fact, one in three kids is considered to be in poverty—a shabby record.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** It's tough to deal sometimes with the third party. They had the last couple of speakers dumping on me because I don't allow local agreements to work out. Had we listened to them, based on this information they had given us, they would have left us with the impression there was a local agreement in Windsor.

Let's be clear. They had a final offer put in place by the board. That was supposed to go to a final-offer vote, which the union didn't agree to. The final offer was going to go forward and then the board withdrew the offer, which they have the right to do under the Labour Relations Act, under their government or our government. The board withdrew the offer. The union came out today and issued a press release saying, "We're going to recommend to our members that we accept the offer that doesn't exist."

Had we taken your advice and whipped the legislation out of this place, there would be no final offer to vote on, there would be no ratification vote to take place, they would still be in a strike position and we would be forced to come back into this House on Monday and begin negotiating again to get back-to-work legislation put in place in Windsor and Toronto. And we'd have to deal with the House leader from hell in your party, who isn't prepared to give us any room on any of this legislation.

With great respect, had we done the suggestion made by Mr Marchese or Ms Churley—and you've told us how unreasonable we are, how we don't understand the process, how we don't understand how this works—we would have had nothing today. Windsor wouldn't have opened on Monday, nor would Toronto.

**Ms Lankin:** Yes, they would. Toronto would.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Maybe. Windsor definitely no, Toronto maybe.

Before you go out next time and drop a hammer on me, maybe, just maybe, Marchese and Churley and the House leader from hell could just check the facts.

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to caution everyone that in the emotion of debate, sometimes we get carried away. The Minister of Labour used a term that I don't think is right in this House, and I'd ask you to withdraw it.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Speaker, I certainly withdraw and apologize.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Toronto—

**Ms Churley:** Danforth. It's Dennis Mills's fault. What can I say? He changed the name again.



I just want to say about our House leader, of course he takes direction from the caucus.

**Mr Kormos:** Absolutely.

**Ms Lankin:** I protest.

**Ms Churley:** Frances is protesting this.

First of all, I want to say to the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka and to all members, when I read the letter from the daughter of an ESL worker and talked about getting lots of letters and e-mails and phone calls from workers and their kids and supporters, you know, I also got letters from the other side. I expect you've been getting letters from both sides as well. That's the difficulty in these kinds of situations. Of course I've heard from angry parents and upset parents and desperate parents. I'm not denying that. I find this a very, very difficult situation. I really do. I just think that everything I said earlier about—I believe my suggestions and my party's suggestions are the correct way to do this. I believe that. I want you to understand that, that I see both sides of this situation, but I have a particular viewpoint that's important and I think could resolve the issue better.

I would ask this of the smug Liberals who are looking at me here right now, that you would take a look at the possibility of Toronto being able to reach a deal here. That still is a real possibility. The Minister of Labour just admitted that. They have signed the deal. So as a Toronto member I'm standing up and asking the Tories to accept that deal today. We can have the workers in Toronto back in school on Monday, Minister—simple as that.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Further debate?

**Mr Martin:** I want to say how pleased I am to have this opportunity this late Friday afternoon, moving into Friday evening, with all and sundry gathered, to put a few thoughts on the record surrounding this very challenging and difficult piece of business that we do here in the House. I'll probably break it up into some comments, however brief, on three areas.

First, I'd like to comment on the turmoil we find in this province now in almost every jurisdiction of public life, in almost every community across the land.

I want to talk a bit about the people involved in this dispute. We've heard a lot about the students, and of course we should, because they are of great concern to everybody here, and their education is of utmost concern. But I want to talk about the men and women who are on the picket line, who they are and what they do so we can put a face on this, connect it to some human dimension so that people might understand that that's in fact what we're talking about here. We're talking about men and women supporting families, doing a good day's work and wanting to be paid appropriately for that work.

And then—and I know this may cause some people some consternation—I want to talk ever so briefly about the social contract, because we've heard it mentioned here this afternoon on a number of occasions. I was there when it was rolled out and there are some things about it that I think people should know. If we just sit and listen and take as the truth what others, of other political affiliations, say, then you don't hear the whole story. Mind

you, after it's all said and done, you won't hear the whole story from me either, but I'll try to at least put a few thoughts on the record as to just exactly how that rolled out, what it was about and what we were attempting to do, and right up front say that, yes, we made some mistakes in that process.

#### 1810

I'm saying that for myself, personally. I watched it and participated in the debate around it and I believe we made some mistakes, mistakes that we've learned from and will learn from and that others here should learn from. As a matter of fact, there were some mistakes we made that this government would be well served to pay attention to here this afternoon, if they want to do the right thing by way of these very valuable workers and the whole concept of collective bargaining, and in the interest of the common good in Ontario.

Then I want to wrap up by sharing with the House an alternative approach to doing business in this wonderful province that is being done in other jurisdictions around the world that we might want to consider. So often in this place we hear from the members of the government that the debate is over: "The decision's been made. Here's where we're going. Just get on board or get off it; don't get in the way." The debate is over and there are no alternatives; there is no alternative. I suggest to you there are many alternatives, all kinds of alternatives as we work with each other co-operatively to try to build a community that's built on a sense of the common good, and try to deliver some programs that recognize the value in public institutions and the need to make sure we include everybody in the decisions we make.

The turmoil: what can I say? Everywhere you look, there's turmoil like in the school system. You talk to the teachers, you talk to the parents, you talk to the students, and there's turmoil. I'm not blaming anybody here for the turmoil, but there is one common denominator in it all. There's turmoil. The school system that's out there now serving our communities is in tremendous turmoil at every level and in every way possible. That doesn't speak to some responsible and intelligent leadership, in my view.

There's turmoil in the health care system. We were in the north today, where we heard a very wonderful announcement of a new medical school up there, but that was sort of superimposed on top of some very difficult circumstances facing health care and the delivery of health care in the fuller context in our part of this wonderful province.

We have almost every major community in northern Ontario trying to build new hospitals, because they were told to by the restructuring commission that this government commissioned. None of the communities I'm talking to or hear about in the news has the money they need to do that. They're after the government to change the formula so it is a littler bit more doable by them, given particularly the great costs now to municipalities by way of the download of services they can hardly afford. You try to build new hospitals, not having the money. You

take hospitals, almost all of them across this province, this year declaring that they're not going to have enough money to pay the bills they need to pay for the ongoing services, declaring deficits all over the place. This government's answer to that is to legislate that it's illegal to run a deficit.

Talk about simple, yet I think really dumb. You have to learn to work with people. There's give and take. There are certain circumstances that arise. But you create turmoil when you do that. When you don't sit down and try to understand what the other side is facing and what they're trying to do by way of the delivery of services, and when you start to legislate an answer, as now in the case of hospitals running deficits, and you try to legislate an answer in terms of what we're dealing with here today and the labour disputes in Windsor and Toronto, you create turmoil. When you create turmoil, you reap what you sow, you reap turmoil.

There's the downloading that's happening across this province in every community and the challenge to municipalities to raise the money that's necessary to pay for the services they're now responsible for, and at a time when the government has imposed limitations on how you can call for property tax to be assessed. So turmoil, turmoil all over the place. No matter where you look, this government is creating turmoil. That's not a good environment to try to do good public work in, to try to bring children up in, to try and run an education system in, to try to deliver health care in, and to try to compete economically in a world that is becoming ever more sophisticated and challenging. So you create turmoil in almost every area.

But the saddest part about this whole question of the turmoil is the obvious lack of understanding in the government that in fact it's out there. We had a speech from the throne last week that would suggest to you that everything is hunky-dory, that there are no problems, and that if there are some problems, it's somebody else's fault—they just don't understand the program; they're not getting with the program; they're not using the tools that have been delivered to them to pare down services and spend less money on the things that we, over a large number of years, have decided together that we need to provide that common pool of services that, if you're going to include everybody, needs to be there.

This government doesn't seem to understand that. It's not in the speech from the throne. It's not referenced in any of the rollouts from that that we've heard over the last week or so. I assume that if they're not mentioning it, if they're not talking about it, they don't agree it's there. They don't understand it and so they're obviously not going to do much to resolve it, except when it bubbles to the surface like we have here today with this labour negotiation that's going on between the support workers in the Toronto school board and down in Windsor. What is their answer? "We'll just legislate. We'll come up with a package of legislation. We'll bring it in here. We'll time-allocate it. We'll try to get unanimous agreement from everybody to ram it through, and then it will be over and everybody will be happy."

We've heard here this afternoon what happens when you do that kind of thing. You sow the seeds of dissent. You show the seeds of resentment and anger and fear. You create an environment out there that isn't going to be good for students and for learning.

Who are you doing this to, in this instance? You're doing it to all those folks, all those men and women who support education, the education support workers: the custodians, the maintenance people, the teachers' aides, the secretaries.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** And who are you doing it to? You're doing it to the students.

**Mr Martin:** Yes, the students are part of this as well. If you're going to find a resolution that's going to serve everybody in this instance, you've got to be willing to take the time to do the full negotiation that is required, so that at the end of the day, everybody feels they have what they need to actually do that job.

You're talking about the janitors, the custodians. I said earlier that's what my mother and father did for a living. I figured they were very talented, very skilled in what they did. There wasn't a thing about the electrical system in that school that he didn't know how to fix. There wasn't a thing in that school about the furnace system, in those long cold winters up in Wawa, that he didn't know how to fix. As a matter of fact, I remember he would go in at 5 or 5:30 in the morning because he would get a call from the police who had gone down to check the school, "The heat's off." He would go down and get it on so the place would be warmed up and comfortable for the students when they arrived.

As I said earlier, he would sit back and watch as the kids came in. Sometimes he would see a kid who didn't have enough to eat or any breakfast. He either invited him into his janitor's room and shared a sandwich with them at lunchtime or he made sure that somebody else was looking after that particular situation.

The secretary who is in the office when the student comes in who is not feeling well, what does she do? She phones the parents. If she can't find the parent, what does she do? She takes the kid home or she takes the kid into the office and lays them down and looks after them. She becomes the nurse and the doctor. Is this not a skill? Is this not something that's worth paying people for?

1820

*Interjection.*

**Mr Martin:** Yes, every worker has the right to earn a decent living. These people are not only people who do the kind of thing that I've just described, but they're also moms and dads, they're mothers and fathers to children. When I was growing up, mom and dad, the custodians, we were seven of us, and as we got bigger and older and teenagers, we ate a lot of food and we wore the knees out of our jeans more quickly because we were out playing. It began to cost a little bit more money to look after that, and that's all these people here are saying in today's world, where the cost of living is going up, the cost of rent or mortgage for your home, the cost of food, the cost of clothing for your children. They're just looking for a little bit more so that they can balance the ledger.



If they're anything like me, they're not really sophisticated in terms of the investments they have and the stockholdings and all that kind of thing. Money comes in, you look at the cost of providing food for the family and paying the rent and buying the clothes and perhaps putting one or all of the children through a little program in the community, and at the end of the day, if there isn't enough, you figure you need a little more. So you go back to your union and you say, "Could you negotiate maybe a 2% or 3% increase, because that's what it takes now for me to look after this family of mine so that they can participate?" They're actually the students, in many cases, in the schools that these people look after.

These are the people we're talking about here this afternoon. These are the people we're wanting to legislate back to work with the back of the hand, a slap across the head, "Thank you very much for all this wonderful work that you're doing out there in the community."

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** Turnbull says you're into the meek, you're talking about the meek.

**Mr Martin:** I don't know if we're into the meek. I'm not sure what we're into. We're into human beings. We're into men and women, we're into mothers and fathers, we're into moms and dads and looking after other people's children in school, supporting them in their effort to learn and be comfortable and safe and out in the schoolyard, making sure there's no glass lying around that kids can fall on and cut their knees. There are so many and myriad ways that support workers in school systems look after our children, who are ever more challenged in the world we live in and present at schools with all kinds of interesting needs. These are the people who are dealing with it.

I said I wanted to talk ever so briefly about the social contract, because we've heard about it here a few times this afternoon. What was that? That was an attempt by a government at a time of some really difficult financial circumstances to try to make ends meet, not unlike the workers we're talking about here today, looking at what's coming in, what's going out, and how you can make sure that everybody's being included; that in a very difficult recessionary time you're not leaving anybody out, not cutting programs that are so absolutely necessary in difficult times.

Yes, we made some mistakes. We didn't talk enough with the people who were going to be affected directly. We didn't take the time necessary to make sure that everybody was onside and understood and were willing to participate so that there was a give and take between the parties involved. Nevertheless, even though we didn't and we made mistakes, big mistakes, in that whole process, we did do a couple of things among others that were very important to me. One thing was the low-income cut-off that we put in. There was discussion and debate and dialogue back and forth about how you protect jobs and protect people on the bottom end of the pay scale in this instance. We put in a low-income cut-off to make sure we protected everybody under \$30,000 who was out there in the public sector and earning a wage so

that they wouldn't be affected in a way that would make it really difficult for them to continue to, as the support staff in the Toronto school board are saying to us today, put bread on the table for their children, pay the rent and get clothing for their children.

The other thing I want to put on the record here is the length of time that it took for us, even though we didn't take enough time to work through the social contract. I remember that summer. It was the only summer that I've been here in 10 years, almost 11 years now, when we stayed until the Friday before the long weekend in August. We were here until the Friday before the long weekend in August debating with all parties the now infamous social contract. As a matter of fact, I went home the Thursday night before that long weekend thinking it was all done, because the whip said, "It's OK, go; it's done; it's finished." But on Friday when I went shopping with my wife I picked up the Toronto Star in the grocery store to see that in fact the House hadn't risen that night, because Norm Sterling, the House leader for the Tories before Ms Ecker, filibustered and didn't let the House rise because he had some other things obviously to put on the record about the social contract and so he did that. Then we were all back on the Tuesday after the long weekend to continue the discussion. My family wasn't real happy about that because we were supposed to be on holiday and trying to get some time together.

We took a tremendous amount of time, probably 18 hours a day for two or three months, trying to work our way through that very difficult process, unlike what we're getting here today re this contract with the Toronto school board and their workers. These folks came in—I don't know when it was, Wednesday or Thursday—and said, "Here's the bill. We want unanimous agreement. We want it through here because we want to hammer these guys back to work and get this done and over with." That's not a lot of time. If you want something concrete to build on, something positive and constructive, you don't do it that way. We didn't take enough time, obviously, because it sure came back to bite us in the behind come the next election, but we certainly did take a lot more time than we're seeing here.

I want to suggest to you that there is another way of doing business that is being done across Europe now, driven by the European Community, that the wonderful country of Ireland is into. They've put together a five-year program called a Program for Prosperity and Fairness. It's a bringing together of the ideas, concerns and needs of all of the major players, the social partners in that community: the labour movement, community groups, small business, big business and government. The first thing they put in here by way of an objective is "ensuring that everybody can feel the benefit of social partnership, recognizing that for many people poverty and social exclusion are still a stark reality ... ensure that those in work have a fair share in our increased national prosperity."

If you just take those two axioms in themselves and compare them to the attitude of this government over the

last six years where organized labour is concerned, and where the effort of organized labour out there trying to negotiate fair wages for their workers is concerned, it has been divisive, negative and bad all the way through.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Beaubien:** I'll be voting in favour of Bill 13, because I want to do what is right for the students.

**The Speaker:** Further questions and comments?

**Mr Sergio:** I am sure the debate will continue on this important issue. For us on the Liberal side, as our leader, Dalton McGuinty, has been saying all along, the most important thing is to see the kids back in the classroom. Having said that, we will not underplay the importance of all the other players involved in this particular situation. The parents, the students, the workers and the union members are all being taken into consideration.

But the fact is that it's not a week that Toronto has been on strike, as the third party has been saying; it is over three weeks now, and this has been causing a lot of anxiety, a lot of concern among not only the students but the working people, working families as well, and that is our main concern.

Some time ago our leader, Dalton McGuinty, put forward a wonderful package, a good solution, which was acceptable to both sides. Unfortunately, the government didn't see fit to accept that, coming perhaps from the opposition. Had the government accepted the McGuinty solution—the peace plan, if you will—we wouldn't be here today. But so be it, we are, and I think we have to be realistic about it and say we want to have the kids back in the classroom. That is the first priority.

We are very close to the year end and the people out there, the parents, the students, say, "You know what? We want to be back in there. We don't care who is saying what, who is doing what, who is accusing whoever on which side. We want to be back in the classroom where we belong. We want to get the education. We want to make sure we don't lose the school year." I think this is the right thing to do. That is the way we see it, for the benefit of the students, and we will be supporting this legislation.

1830

**Ms Martel:** Ramming this legislation through, especially on workers who have come to a voluntary agreement to be back in the schools on Monday, of course is not going to solve the problem in Toronto district schools with respect to the cuts this government has made to education.

The government might have its way with respect to putting in place a draconian arbitration process that they will no doubt want to use again in future disputes that are going to occur in the province with respect to education issues, because at the heart of what we're dealing with tonight and what we're going to continue to deal with is that this government has taken \$1.5 billion out of the education system, which has surely caused the chaos that the former minister, John Snobelen, wanted to have in the first place.

I'll give you an example from my riding about what the impact has been of the \$1.5-billion cut to education that this government has made, all to finance a tax cut for its rich and famous friends. This is the result of a meeting I had with the director of education for the Rainbow District School Board. Before some of the government members talk about how school boards have misused public funds, they should know that this is a school board that up until this fall had a trustee by the name of Ernie Checkeris, who is on the government's little curriculum committee that they had, to try and see how they could have curriculum again in our schools. He is a friend of this government, and frankly when he was on the board as trustee was very friendly to the government. So it's very clear that this is not a group—but they've got a \$4.6 million problem, and that's not going to be resolved by this legislation tonight either.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** It is a pleasure to take part in this debate, I would say unnecessary debate, because we could have dealt with this matter earlier. I know that today the NDP keeps saying, "The end is near. The contract is signed or is being signed." We are actually following the path that this legislation, if passed, is going to allow the parties to pursue this. It's going to give them a week to come to their own agreement. So it's not draconian per se, as they keep saying.

The NDP, the third party, once in a while asks us, "Don't you have a heart? Don't you think about the children?" Of course we're thinking about the children. That is precisely the reason we're making sure that it's been long enough—four or five weeks. If they keep putting roadblocks as they've been trying for the last 48 hours, this is going to delay classes by another two weeks, and there is a real danger that some of the kids will miss their school year this year. So we want to make sure we are enticing the parties to come together, to come to an agreement, so I'm very much in support of this.

Earlier on, in terms of the reform of the curriculum, one of the members said that his child has 1.5 hours of homework. I'm very happy that because of the new curriculum, because of the improvements we've done to the education system, kids today are getting back to basics. They are paying attention to homework and the parents are working together with them. This legislation that we bring in together is going to bring kids back to school, it's going to bring the caretakers back to school and it's all going to be a win-win situation.

**The Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Martin:** I want to thank those who responded and participated. In my 20 minutes I talked about the turmoil that's been created across this province in almost every jurisdiction. It seems to be endless, and it's no more prevalent than in the lives of some of our poorest individuals and children. I asked, this past week, the government to move to resolve even just a little bit of that by giving back to children the national child tax benefit supplement, an average of \$100 per child per month. It would



go a long ways to relieving some of the poverty in that circumstance.

I talked a bit about the men and women reflected here in terms of this negotiation, the support workers with the Toronto school board, those people who work very hard, who put in hours above and beyond the call of duty, who do things that you wouldn't expect they would have to do for children and for their families to make sure that work environment, that school environment, is a safe and warm and comfortable place for those students to attend and get their education. All they're asking for, through a process that's been in place in this province for a long, long time, is a fair and adequate and fulsome negotiation process. Yes, going on strike is not something that anybody ever does blithely or easily, and it creates a difficulty, actually, that this government could take a bit of the edge off of if they would only back off in terms of the legislation that's before us here today and allow the natural evolution of this negotiation to happen. As a matter of fact, we've seen here this afternoon that an agreement was found in the Toronto case.

I also said that we don't have to be doing it this way, that there are other jurisdictions around this world that are doing it differently.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker. I thought I'd never get my turn, but I've waited since 1:30.

What's of concern is that the New Democrats have spoken to this bill at every opportunity they've had today. We've heard precious little from Conservative backbenchers, who I presume are going to vote for the bill. I'm concerned that the Conservative backbenchers haven't had a chance to explain to their constituents in their ridings why they're supporting this legislation. More interesting is that we haven't had a chance to hear from Liberal backbenchers, because the message has been loud and clear that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are clearly against the union and the workers. They're voting for this bill. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are clearly with Mike Harris and the Tories. The Liberals have collaborated with this Tory government from the get-go.

Understand what happened earlier this week. The Liberals and the Tories wanted this bill to receive first, second and third readings in one fell swoop, with no debate. Why? Why would an elected member of this legislature advocate the passage of legislation with no debate? This forum is about debate. At the very least, you utilize your place here and the speaking slots you've got as a venue for explaining to your folks where you come from, many of whom vote for you, why you're taking the position you are here on this bill. It would give the Liberals a chance to explain, not just to their constituents in their home ridings but to the people of Ontario, why it is that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals have crawled into bed with Mike Harris and the Tories. It's a close, intimate relationship. They're breathing each other's carbon dioxide. I think the people of Ontario should have

an opportunity to understand why it is that there's this new alliance—

**Ms Churley:** It's always been there. It's just come out in the open.

**Mr Kormos:** —that there's this alliance that has finally manifested itself, that's finally out in the open—no more clandestine meetings, no more cheap motel rooms. There it is. It's finally out there in the open for the world to see, this new, intimate relationship between Mike Harris and the Conservatives and, of all partners, of all the possible coalitions that could have been formed, this remarkable coalition between Mike Harris and the Tories and Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals.

1840

**Ms Martel:** Are you surprised?

**Mr Kormos:** Well, no. You see, I've known this for a long time, just from watching, that one of the nice things about being a Liberal is that you don't always have to be a Liberal. Today has proven it. You see, the Liberals made choices. They're going to be for the working people, they're going to be for the thousands of women and men who have been out there on the street fighting for—let's put this in a little bit more accurate context. Let's understand what the issues are. There are some sisters here from CUPE Local 4400. These workers—we've already talked about them a little bit: custodial workers; ESL, English-as-a second-language workers; TAs, teaching assistants; clerical people; people working in principals' offices and working in the boiler rooms and working in the hallways and working in the cafeterias, and working with kids with special needs. All of these are special people.

Rosario Marchese, the member from Trinity-Spadina, and I were down with these workers when they had a huge rally, thousands of people over in front of the Ministry of Education. Then Howard Hampton went and joined them at the Toronto District School Board down on College. Am I right? Yes. Once again, Rosario Marchese, the member for Trinity-Spadina, joined them and other New Democrats joined them again at the Toronto District School Board two nights ago.

Howard Hampton and other New Democrats have been proud to stand side by side, shoulder to shoulder, arm in arm with these workers. We've been proud to join in their fight, their struggle, and we're not ashamed of our interest in staying firm in our support for working people, our support for the trade union movement, in our recognition that that trade union movement, in this case CUPE and its leadership, their local president John Weatherup, their provincial and national leadership, elected, have been at the forefront of the fight for social justice and some modest economic justice. Understand, as you've heard already from the member for Toronto-Danforth, formerly Riverdale, and as you heard from our member from Sault Ste Marie, these are not high-wage workers. These people work full 40- and 45-, yes, and 50-hour weeks, and they work hard and they're committed. I'm sorry, Mr Member from Kitchener, who wants to dismiss these workers, and I suppose similar

women and men like them in his own community—look, if he says that to you here in this Legislature today, imagine what he thinks about the people in his own community of Kitchener area: “These are unskilled people. They don’t warrant fair and decent wages, and clearly they don’t warrant the right to freely, collectively bargain their contracts, their work agreements, with their boss.”

I understand that Tories, Conservatives, believe that. Conservatives don’t like trade unions. They don’t like workers. Clearly, when we hear what the member from Kitchener or thereabouts has to say about the workers who work as support staff in our schools, they like low-income workers even less.

**Ms Martel:** They love developers.

**Mr Kormos:** Oh, yes. The Conservatives love Frank Stronach. They love John Roth. They love their good friends—\$700,000-and-what a year, the head of the WSIB.

**Mr Hampton:** It’s \$775,000, I believe.

**Mr Kormos:** It’s 775 G notes, 775 grand, \$775,000 a year.

These women and men working for the Toronto District School Board, working with your kids and your grandkids, are an integral, essential part of their education. They are part of the educational family, and there isn’t another co-worker, there is not a teacher, not a principal who would say otherwise. That you can bet your boots on. That I know. There isn’t a parent who would say otherwise, not a single parent who has even the most passing familiarity with what these folks do in our schools.

They were looking for some modest wage increases. Quite frankly, they sought nothing more than the same percentage increase—not volume, not dollars, far from it; please, not in their wildest dreams—that the Toronto District School Board felt was OK to give to teachers; not the same dollar amount, far from it, but the same percentage amount. Am I wrong? Tell me if I’m wrong. And as importantly, perhaps even more importantly, they wanted some job protection—hold on—they wanted protection against contracting out.

Look, folks, there isn’t a working family out there that hasn’t been touched in one way or another by contracting out. You folks know exactly what I’m talking about. Contracting out: that’s when your good job gets displaced by a contractor out there who is making profits. In this case, we’re going to be talking about private contractors making profits off the public tax dollar. That’s what happens. Think about it. I’ve always found it really nuts—the Tories love it—that as Ontarians, we in any way, shape or form would tolerate public money being used to create private profits. But that’s what contracting out is all about, isn’t it, sisters? It’s using public money to create private profits.

Let’s put it on the table and make it very clear: these 13,000 workers with the Toronto District School Board are parents too. They are also taxpayers. In view of how Mike Harris’s tax break, tax-cut scheme has provided the

biggest tax breaks for the wealthiest people, these people, these sisters and brothers in CUPE, Local 4400, pay a far bigger chunk of their income in taxes by way of things like sales tax, GST, taxes on gasoline and a whole plethora of other things. They didn’t get the tax cuts. The tax cuts just went to the rich folk. These people aren’t rich folk. They wouldn’t mind me saying so, I’m sure of it. There are no pretensions about any of them. There ain’t no BMWs parked in that parking lot where these people go to work. There ain’t no Mercedes or Cadillac Seattles. More often than not it’s a TTC pass.

If you take a look at the profile of these workers, there’s a whole lot of women, and more than a few of these women are working incredibly hard, supporting their families and raising their kids on their own—a lot of single moms. That’s the reality. It’s neither good, bad nor indifferent; that’s the reality. These are single moms that the Tories, the Mike Harris Conservatives, not singularly or standing alone but with the enthusiastic—look, they didn’t drag Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals kicking and screaming to the altar. McGuinty is traipsing up there. He’s anxious. He’s breaking out in a sweat because he’s running to engage in this partnership with Mike Harris and the Tories.

#### 1550

Make no mistake about it: the Liberals are enjoying this legislation. They were happier than pigs in a barnyard yesterday when the legislation got jacked up a little bit in terms of happening a little sooner than most of us would have hoped. The Liberals were happier than pigs in a barnyard. There’s videotape of them—I saw it last night—of the Liberals cheering, “All right, because we’re going to beat the crap out of some workers tomorrow. We’re going to take on with Mike Harris. We’re going to form a bond, and the Liberals and Dalton McGuinty and Mike Harris are going to kick around some trade unions.” That’s what this legislation is all about: taking on workers, taking on low-income workers. Oh, yes, that’s big, guys. When are you going to take on Frank Stronach, with \$42 million a year in personal income? When are you going to take on the John Roths?

**Ms Churley:** They gave him a tax break.

**Mr Kormos:** You didn’t take Stronach on; you gave him a tax break. You didn’t take on the big bank CEOs, you didn’t take on the big corporate bosses. Oh no, you crawled into their back pocket.

Mike Harris and the Conservatives, along now with Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, are so deep in the back pockets of corporate Canada that they’re spitting out lint. But they just love a chance to whack around, as the member for Trinity-Spadina would be wont to say, some trade unionists and some working people. The Tories seem to get a bigger thrill out of it. It’s always nice to share these things with friends. So now they get to share this with Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals. You know how when you go on vacation and you see nice sights you always wish you had a friend with you to share; or you go to a movie and you say, “Jeez, this was a really good movie. I’m having such a good time I wish I



had brought a friend along with me to share." Mike Harris has brought his new friends, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, along with him to do their union bashing.

These are a special kind of people. They're very special, because they want to team up—and we're not talking about tag team here; we're not talking about one day Harris is going to take on trade unionists and the next day McGuinty. No, they're going to gang up and do it, like, tight—collaboration. There's a special kind of unity between the Liberals and the Conservatives. We've discovered there's some fascinating commonality in their policies. They believe in the same things and they beat up on the same groups of people: women, single moms, trade unionists, workers, who want a little bit, just a little bit more, a little bit of economic justice, who just want a little bit more in terms of the prospect of some job security, because let's understand that the job security and the fight that these folks are engaged in against contracting out isn't just to keep good jobs, important jobs, jobs that help take care; it's to keep our schools the safe places that these workers make them. It's about keeping safe.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Contract employees.

**Mr Kormos:** You're darned right contract employees create a problem, because you've got cleaning companies—get a contract one year, get a contract next year.

Didn't you hear the member from Sault Ste Marie? His folks were school custodians. He gave us as vivid an image of what it means—these are the folks who help make our schools safe year after year after year. They're committed to the school, they're committed to the kids. These folks survive one and two generations of kids. You've got sisters and brothers working as school support people who have taught the parents and are now teaching their kids. They know these families.

**Mr Martin:** They love their jobs.

**Mr Kormos:** They love their jobs and they love those kids.

You want to talk about sacrificing workers—well, you're not talking about it, you're doing it, I guess. Yes, you're not just talking about sacrificing workers' rights; you guys are trying to roll the clock back for working people in this province. You're certainly trying to roll the clock back on arbitration, with its—what?—200 or 300 years of history, in an unprecedented way imposing a named arbitrator. I think that's *prima facie* non-neutral. Do you understand what I'm saying? I don't care who this guy acted for before, but the fact that he's named in legislation that's sponsored by the government makes it *prima facie* non-neutral. The government has a clear interest, especially when you look at the mandate provisions in the bill, in having a real handle, a real stranglehold, but then again the Liberals have a clear interest in having a real handle or stranglehold on the mandate.

Some pretty interesting lines have been drawn this week. Are there a whole lot of New Democrats here? No, there are only nine of us. But, by God, every one of us is sticking firmly—we're sticking with the union, we're

sticking with the women and men who make those unions and who are members in them and who democratically elect their leadership and who democratically make decisions about their own free collective bargaining process, as they should.

One of the other fundamentals that you folks, all of you, Conservatives and Liberals—shame; my God, shame—don't seem to understand is that that's what free collective bargaining is all about. When two parties negotiate their own agreement, arrive at their own settlement, it has greater legitimacy, it has greater enforceability, it has greater longevity, and it also creates a healthier, better, more productive, more effective workplace. See, these workers, these women and men, school support workers, believe in our public schools and they want those places to work, and they work hard to make sure they work even though this government has stripped—we've heard it so many times now—\$1.5 billion out of education by Mike Harris's Tories, again, to feed their rich, fat-cat, wealthy corporate friends and leave these folks hanging out to dry.

The Liberals and Tories may want to take on working people and knock them around, may want to take on unions and tell the rest of the world that unions are irrelevant. New Democrats are with those workers, with their unions.

**The Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I guess that was a speech regarding—I'm not sure what it was—some variation on the back-to-work-legislation governments have implemented. The question I want to put to the member is, where exactly were you on October 20, 1993, when your government was putting the boots to Lambton secondary school teachers?

**Mr Kormos:** Check the record.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I checked the record. You didn't vote against that.

**Mr Kormos:** I didn't vote for it.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Oh my gosh. There's a principled man—a spine of Jell-O. "You didn't vote against that." "I didn't vote for it." No, but you were a member of the House. You could have been here. You could have made that kind of speech then. Gosh, you didn't, did you? Where were you when East Parry Sound teachers were ordered back on November 29, 1993? You didn't vote against that one either, my friend. Where were you when the brothers and sisters were getting kicked around by the NDP government? Where were you? You weren't here making a speech like that. I was here. You weren't here telling us about the poor Bob Rae government that kicks around the hard-working brothers and sisters in Lambton and Parry Sound, and you had power. You could have done something about it, but you weren't here. You've only found God since you went back to opposition. That's it.

You stand here and give us a lecture like that. When you had the levers of power and could have done something about it, we couldn't find you. You weren't in this room. You were off doing something else. It wasn't

important then, was it? It wasn't important then because, "I was in the government and I can't stand up and crap on my own party. I can't take a moral stand, a principled position, because I'd be disagreeing with my party." But let the government of the Conservative Party do it and suddenly, "I'm the moral high ground, superfibre of strong backbone." Give me a break.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I listened with interest to the comments made by the member from Niagara. He spent half his time attacking the government and the other half attacking the official opposition. My comments are along the same lines. Somehow, the third party have found their principles once they're back now to an irrelevant rump in the Legislature of the province of Ontario.

1900

This is the party that claims to have the monopoly on representing working men and women, and when they were in government they said to every single public servant in Ontario, "Here's what we're doing with your contract. Here it is. It's ripped up. It's not good any more." Do you remember that? They ripped up the contracts of those men and women they claimed to represent and who had negotiated across the table. It wasn't good enough then.

Then what did they do? They went to the Rae days. They said to those men and women who had negotiated contracts, "We're going to roll back your wages 5%. To hell with negotiations. To heck with your contracts. We're going to rip up your contracts and roll back your wages 5%, but we represent you, believe us. We really care about you." Remember, that's the same government, when they were there for those five, long desperate years in Ontario. Remember that.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Agostino:** I'm glad they're getting rattled. Obviously we're getting to them here. But remember that. On three occasions, that government that now claims to represent working men and women voted for back-to-work legislation for teachers while they were in government. What hypocrisy. What shame. They represent no one but their own limited self-interest. They sold out working men and women in government, and they continue to do that.

**Mr Marchese:** Dominic, in his cacophony of loudness, suggests that they are the party that supports the working man, that New Democrats don't have the monopoly, that we don't have it but they do.

What we ask you, Dominic, is, which side are you on? When it comes to an important vote that says we don't support this government that wants to send the people back to work, and they ask you, "Liberals, which side are you on?" which side are you on, Dominic? You sound no different than M. Chrétien, who says, "We are not like Mike Harris. We have a heart." They have reduced the deficit by 40%. How did they do it? On the backs of the unemployed. Forty per cent of the deficit was reduced by going after the unemployed. While the employment insurance benefits have been going up by the billions,

they cut back on the unemployed. Oh, that's Chrétien with a heart. They care about the workers in the same way that Dominic stands up today to accuse the NDP by saying, "You don't have a monopoly. We, the Liberals, we're on your side too." We say to you, Dominic, if you're on their side, vote against them. Stand up and speak against them. You have been loudly declaring yourself where so many of the others have been so silent tonight. Why? Because you are complicit in the crime. The two of you, both parties, are in the same boat.

We're going to have an opportunity, good citizens, because the member from Niagara Centre will be able to speak again. We will be back here at 7:30 to debate on third reading, because we're going to vote on second reading very shortly, in a half hour or so. We'll be back for third reading because we have so much more to say, good citizens. Stick around.

**Mr Gill:** Thank you for the opportunity given to me. The member opposite talked about Frank Stronach. He made it sound as if the guy's a criminal. Frank Stronach, as I understand it, came in just like myself, as an immigrant. He worked hard. He earned a living, worked very hard and then created jobs. This is a typical hard-working immigrant. Now he's making it look like he's a criminal. Frank Stronach or any of the immigrants who have worked very hard, have become successful and given jobs to people, are not criminals.

This bill is so important for hard-working single mothers as well, so that the kids can go back to school and the mothers can go back to work.

Let's talk about standardized testing. This bill will make sure that schools are open, that kids can go back to school, that we can save their school year and that they're getting quality education.

There is some news in the newspaper today where some of the kids were interviewed at I suppose the Eaton Centre, where they were literally having a good time. But they're getting bored. They want to get back to their classes. This party is putting roadblocks to this legislation. We want to make sure this is passed quickly. I propose that we don't take any breaks, go through the process and get it over with so that the kids can go back to school.

**The Speaker:** Response? The member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Kormos:** The Liberals are in an interesting position with respect to this bill. You've got the Liberals going, "Ouch, ooh, aah, ow," every time a New Democrat stands up to point out where they stand on the issue. Look, end of story. Boom. Dalton McGuinty Liberals, Mike Harris Tories, six of one, half a dozen of the other, they support the same legislation for the same reason. They don't want to take a position that forces working people back to work when those working people are working hard trying to negotiate a freely negotiated, free collective bargained agreement.

I think the Liberals from cities that are industrial cities, among others, who have got trade union communities in them, are going to have a lot of explaining to do



to the CUPE membership in their communities about why they joined with the Tories to take on and beat up on the lowest-wage CUPE workers. They're going to have some explaining to do to the SEIU, the Service Employees International Union, members in their communities, to explain why they were in bed with the Tories enthusiastically. They're loving it.

**Ms Churley:** The Tories are applauding them.

**Mr Kormos:** The Tories are applauding the Libs and the Libs are applauding the Tories. It's a mutual admiration society. I tell you, we've seen a remarkable metamorphosis—these little things, you know, caterpillars, butterflies, what have you. We end up that the Liberals are Tories and the Tories are Liberals. The only thing these Liberals don't have that Chrétien's Liberals do is the huge containers of teargas. You guys haven't teargassed the place yet. But I suppose, if Chrétien has any left, you'll teargas the real opposition here, the New Democrats.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? Seeing none, Mr Stockwell has moved second reading of Bill 13, An Act to resolve labour disputes affecting the Toronto District School Board and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1908 to 1938.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Flaherty, Jim	Newman, Dan
Arnott, Ted	Gilchrist, Steve	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Gill, Raminder	Ruprecht, Tony
Beaubien, Marcel	Hardeman, Ernie	Sampson, Rob
Bradley, James J.	Hastings, John	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
Colle, Mike	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Tilson, David
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Norm	Tsubouchi, David H.
Dunlop, Garfield	Molinari, Tina R.	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Elliott, Brenda	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	Martin, Tony
Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 42; the nays are 8.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

*Report continued in volume B.*

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Beaches-East York	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
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## CONTENTS

Friday 27 April 2001

### SECOND READINGS

#### **Back to School Act (Toronto and Windsor), 2001, Bill 13,**

*Mr Stockwell*

Mr Stockwell	199, 202, 223, 236, 243
Mr Bisson	200, 219, 224, 236
Mrs Marland	201, 218
Mr Colle	201, 214
Mr Martin	201, 223, 232, 237, 241
Mr Kennedy	202, 206
Mr Duncan	203, 223, 236
Ms Di Cocco	204
Mr Smitherman	205
Ms Lankin	205, 215, 219
Mrs Ecker	205
Mr Phillips	206
Mr Marchese	206, 229, 232, 244
Mr Hampton	207, 215, 227
Mr Tascona	214, 232
Mr Kormos	214, 218, 241, 244
Mr Beaubien	214
Mr Sergio	218, 240
Mr O'Toole	219
Mr Gilchrist	224
Ms Martel	224, 228, 240
Mr Clark	227
Mr Stewart	228
Mr Hastings	228
Mr Wettlaufer	231
Mr Caplan	232
Ms Churley	233, 237
Mr Miller	235
Mr Gill	240, 244
Mr Agostino	244
<i>Agreed to</i>	245

### TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Vendredi 27 avril 2001

### SECOND READINGS

#### **Loi de 2001 sur le retour à l'école (Toronto et Windsor), Projet**

*de loi 13, M. Stockwell*

M. Lalonde	227
Adoptée	245



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des débats  
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**Friday 27 April 2001**

**Vendredi 27 avril 2001**

**Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr**

**Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr**

**Clerk  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Friday 27 April 2001

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Vendredi 27 avril 2001

*Report continued from volume A.*

1940

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

BACK TO SCHOOL ACT  
(TORONTO AND WINDSOR), 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LE RETOUR  
À L'ÉCOLE (TORONTO ET WINDSOR)

Mr Stockwell moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to resolve labour disputes affecting the Toronto District School Board and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board / Projet de loi 13, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail qui touchent les conseils scolaires de district appelés Toronto District School Board et Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** We said 15 and I took 10. I'll say 10 and take five on this one. I just want to get a couple of clarifications on the record, basically for my friend opposite from Toronto-Danforth, and my other friend—is it Trinity-Fort York?

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** Trinity-Spadina.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Trinity-Spadina. I apologize. I can remember your old riding, Fort York.

Listen, the Windsor issue: I think we've dealt with that. We have a situation where I was pretty much browbeaten by the member for Trinity-Spadina about why I didn't accept the offer with respect to the Windsor situation. I want to respond very clearly to his questions. Let's be clear. The offer you're talking about was pulled by the Windsor board. They did not go to a final-offer vote. It wasn't approved to go to the final-offer vote. All this particular piece of paper says is that SEIU local 210 has agreed to accept the final offer.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I'd like to welcome the member for St Catharines back.

They have not agreed to go to final-offer vote. So the SEIU letter you received today that's been so kindly given to me by some doesn't mean anything. There's no offer to accept. There is no offer to take for ratification. So to be clear, there's nothing on the table in Windsor at this point in time that is going to be accepted. OK? So

there's nothing there. If we didn't pass the legislation here today there would be nothing—

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** Tell us something new.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** And welcome back to the doctor too—there would be nothing at all to ratify.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I know the Liberals have a convention and I'm not surprised Mr Ruprecht is with us.

At the end of the day, we're in a situation basically now where there's no offer in Windsor.

There has been talk about an agreement in Toronto. The agreement in Toronto is to agree to a process of binding arbitration. They have not made a collective agreement in Toronto at any time now. After this bill is passed, before the arbitrator gets to work, after the arbitrator gets to work, the two parties are free to collectively negotiate an agreement. They can collectively negotiate an agreement and it will usurp or override the legislation. Bear that in mind. It will override the legislation. So the fact is, we will pass this legislation, which is the only guarantee that schools will be open next Monday, and any of these parties can enter into a collective agreement that overrides the binding arbitration we've set out in the legislation. It's just that simple. I know Mr Martin shakes his head, but I'm telling you, if you want to collectively negotiate an agreement, there's no binding arbitration process set down by a government that can change that. Nowhere.

So I would ask that the parties get together today. Let's process this through third reading as quickly as possible. Let's get this bill passed today. Let's get it proclaimed tonight. Let's get the schools open on Monday.

I thank my caucus members for staying around here today. As a member for Toronto I thank you, because I want to tell you, the people of Toronto and I'm sure Windsor respect the fact that you're here today working on their behalf to get their children back to the classroom.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** I want to reiterate that in the Windsor situation the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Education have properly informed the House that there is no local solution in sight, in spite of what was said in the House earlier today by a number of members of the third party.

I don't think anybody in this House likes to do this. I don't think any of us want to be in this position. This is day 25 in Windsor, and I again am reminded of Dave

Cooke on day 26 of a strike situation in Windsor back in 1993, where he said, "It's essential that we get the kids back now."

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** An NDP minister.

**Mr Duncan:** Yes, an NDP minister. That was in the absence of a declaration of jeopardy, and all the NDP members who are in this House today voted in favour of that legislation in spite of the fact that there was no jeopardy declared. They had a provision in that. They criticized—and by the way, I do have trouble with some of the arbitration procedures, but their arbitration procedure was called the social contract. The arbitration panel was bound by the Social Contract Act in that particular agreement, so they appointed an arbitration commission that couldn't arbitrate outside of the terms of the social contract, which opened up and stripped collective agreements throughout this province.

Earlier today they told this House that there was a deal in Windsor. I knew there wasn't and I had to reconfirm that. It took me a while to find that out because, unlike them, I have been in constant communication with both sides and I was hoping that perhaps that was the case, but it turned out that in fact there was not a deal.

This is not a happy thing for any of us to do. I regret that we're doing this. But I do not regret the fact that the children in Windsor, my son included, will be back in school on Monday morning with certainty, and the families in my community can be assured of that tonight.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** It was, I must say, a very interesting vote. We have now seen three or four occasions in this debate where the Liberal Party has gotten up and sided with the government, has supported the government in its bid to try to get away from what was a negotiated settlement in the city of Toronto. We know that the board and the union, CUPE Local 4400, had negotiated an agreement that would have got the children back to the classroom by Monday of this upcoming week. But this government has decided to press forward with what is in my view draconian legislation, legislation that says, among other things, that the minister, when appointing an arbitrator, doesn't have to take into account that the person has any experience, doesn't have to worry if that person has had any dealings with the board or the union. They could be in a situation of conflict. They don't have to worry that at the end of the day, if a decision is made based on error by law, the parties are not able to go back and look at judicial review. They don't worry about those issues, but we do.

I am really surprised—no, not surprised; very disappointed—at the actions of the Liberal Party that we've seen here in the last couple of days. They sided with the government at first reading. They have moved to allow this to go to debate today. They could have stopped it yesterday but they didn't; they decided to side with the government and now, today, they vote on second reading in favour of this draconian legislation.

I think the issues are simple: in the case of Toronto there was a negotiated settlement. The minister could

have tried, had he decided, to find a way to give the parties the opportunity in the city of Toronto to finish what they started, which was to allow them to go back to school on Monday, because there is an agreement, it is signed and both parties are willing to live with it. The Minister of Labour does not want to recognize that. I, for one, find that extremely frustrating. So if it means we sit here and debate, so we shall, because we as New Democrats believe it's important.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I just want to say, having been in this House for almost eight hours now, that I recognize by listening to the New Democratic Party that they still don't get it.

**1950**

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** It's Friday night and we're having this extraordinary sitting of the House to deal with a very important issue. We have a weekend ahead of us and I wonder, really, how the parents of the 300,000 kids would be thinking over this weekend. Instead of being peaceful and alleviated of anxiety, they could be thinking, "Are we going to have a strike Monday or are the kids going to go back, are the teachers going to go back?" Whatever. I think it's important to give them some peace of mind. I think it's important to assure them that the kids are going to be back in the classroom come next week. Enough is enough.

We hear one week of strike in Toronto—I think we are on the fourth week coming up, and I think everybody has had enough. But most importantly, it is the interests of the kids that's the number one priority. We take into consideration everything else, everybody else.

But let me say this quickly. The other day coming down to Queen's Park here, I was listening to one of the news stations and they were interviewing a mother and said, "What do you think about the strike?" She said, "You know what? Four interruptions in two years." Four interruptions in two years. She said, "I really don't want to bring my kids up with the idea that there is a strike every six months. I don't think this is a good environment for our kids to grow up in. They will not receive a good education in this particular environment." That makes sense, so I would say let's get the kids back in class. Let's hope we can reach an agreement afterwards that will be satisfactory to everybody concerned. But I think we have to be concerned about the parents as well, who have been in a very sad and very havocked situation for the past three weeks. So, I hope we can get this on.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** Response.

**The Speaker:** Oh, I'm sorry, the labour minister.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I thank the members for entering into the discussion.

I want to just clarify something I think the member for Timmins-James Bay said. He said that they have an agreement. They don't have an agreement. They have an agreement to work through a process. There's nothing but—what are you shaking your head for, the member for Sault Ste Marie? Why are you shaking your head? I can hear you all the way over here.



The fact is this: they have an agreement to enter into a process. That's it. Just an agreement to enter into a process. There's nothing binding about the agreement. There are no penalties if the parties don't live up to the agreement. There are no guarantees the agreement will be enacted or enforced. It's an agreement designated by an arbitrator's order. There's no legal standing for it, nothing. So, the fact of the matter remains that the only way you can guarantee the schools are open come Monday is to pass the legislation.

Now, I say to the members opposite, if you're concerned about the fact that you want the local union and the members of the board to negotiate a—

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Get your head out of the sand.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Get my head out of the sand? The member for Riverdale tells me to get my head out of the sand after she walked in here not two hours ago, standing in her place, claiming "There's a deal in Windsor. Withdraw the bill." Two hours ago you were saying that and you want me to get my head out of the sand? You should give your head a shake and clear the sand from your ears. There is no deal in Windsor. Two hours ago you were telling me you had a deal in Windsor. For goodness sakes. You shouldn't make these allegations when you put yourself in such an awkward position not more than two hours ago. For heaven's sake, they can reach a collective agreement any time they want, any time they want. Go meet with the board. Get a collective agreement. The legislation means nothing. Always has been the law, as far as I know, always will be the law. Get your head out of the sand.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with the member for York West and the member for Don Valley East.

I was tempted at the beginning of this, because one of my staff members, I should tell Rosario, told me that Rosario had made a very inflammatory speech in which he attacked the Liberals and used "reptilian" and words of that kind. So I thought, "Should I get up and give a bombastic speech and recall many instances from the past, or should I be more moderate this evening?" I chose the moderate course.

I want to tell you why that is. I can't think of a government, even this government, that really wants to deal with back-to-work legislation, that doesn't want to see the collective bargaining process work, because in our society that's the best of all possible worlds. Two sides get together and they may be tough in their negotiations at the table, but eventually they come forward with a contract that both sides believe they can live with. I wish that were the case.

We have in this instance a third party that has a very significant stake in these negotiations. That third party is the students who are affected by this particular strike.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The security guard who is here has to

stay all evening tonight, and it's his birthday. I think we should let him go home for his birthday.

**The Speaker:** Unfortunately, he has to be here, but we certainly will take note of his birthday and wish him all the best. Hopefully he'll be off at 11 o'clock.

**Mr Bradley:** I must share with members, particularly of the government side, because we in the opposition are critical on many occasions of what the government does, and with some justification. When they say, "Why don't you praise the government?" I say they have all kinds of members to do the praising. So when the news media phone, they can talk to the government members. They will give them their side, and I'll give the other side.

I know the difficulty when one finally reaches the government benches. I was on the opposition benches to start out. I spent a little over five years on the government benches, and then back on the opposition benches, so I tend to know the different perspectives that we have.

The way you can really judge a party and its positions is by what they do when they're in government. I have to confess that I was part of a government that had back-to-work legislation on one occasion, which involved education. We legislated teachers in one part of the province back to work. I didn't like that. The Conservative government ordered educators back to work on other occasions. The legislation usually went through rather rapidly. The New Democratic Party, which today opposes this legislation, was in the unfortunate position of having to order teachers back to work: the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation in Lambton in October 1993; in East Parry Sound, the elementary FWTAO and OPSTF in 1993-94; and of course in Windsor, the elementary FWTAO and OPSTF in 1993-94.

I've known many members of the New Democratic Party for a long period of time, those who sat in it, and I know many have very close ties with people in the trade union movement and in the public sector union movement. I know they feel strongly about those ties and about legislation which would legislate people back. But when confronted with this situation when in government—not in opposition, because I admit to you it's easy when we're in opposition on many occasions to automatically oppose the government, but when you're in government, what do you do when you face the same circumstances? I can't think of anybody in the NDP caucus of the day who wanted to vote for any one of these back-to-work pieces of legislation. I know of nobody in the NDP caucus who wanted to do that.

I can't think of anybody in the NDP caucus who wanted to bring in a piece of legislation, the social contract, which would abrogate every collective agreement in Ontario in the public sector. I know of no one, because, again, I know many of the members from years back and the members who are here today. It wasn't done with malice, it wasn't done to victimize anyone; it was done because the NDP government of the day thought it was necessary to do.

I remember Dave Cooke, who was a very strong New Democrat. I would consider him to be a pretty hard-

nosed New Democrat in his day. When he was dealing with his legislation in Windsor, he had the following to say:

"The government has the responsibility to ensure that labour disputes in the education sector do not endanger the school year of the affected students. A process which has been put in place for many years guides the determination of when a school year is in jeopardy...."

"The strike in Windsor is in its 26th day. The ERC has not advised that the school year is in jeopardy. In fact, yesterday the commission reported to me, 'There is no convincing evidence of jeopardy to the courses of study at this point in time.' Nevertheless this government feels the action must be taken to ensure that the strike does not continue past the point which would be detrimental to the elementary school students in Windsor...."

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"A three-member arbitration panel will be convened to examine all matters remaining in the dispute between the teachers and the board related to the local agreement entered into by the parties under the Social Contract Act, 1993...."

"I want to make it clear to the House that the legislation will only be proclaimed when the Education Relations Commission advises the school year is in jeopardy."

What in fact happened in this particular case was that there was to be arbitration but there were conditions of the arbitration. It must be within the framework of the chief piece of government legislation of the day, the chief piece of labour legislation in that particular year, and that was the social contract.

I did not condemn nor do I to this very day condemn my friends in the New Democratic Party for having to bring in that legislation. I didn't like the wording of the social contract legislation and voted against that, but in terms of the necessity of having students not have their year placed in jeopardy, I understood that with great reluctance—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Order. You have a turn. You both have a turn. You will either use your turn or you won't be here for it.

The Chair recognizes the member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** All of these books we have are not destroyed. They are the speeches and they are the records of what happens in this House when each one of us is in government. So when we in opposition criticize the government, as we do from time to time, I know you have staff who go through these books to quote what we said and to determine what action we took when it was in our power. Not when we were in opposition and can criticize government, but when we actually had the power to implement our policies, what did we do?

Oftentimes governments do things without, as I said, wanting to do them. If they had another route to take, another way of expressing their responsibility, they would do so. But oftentimes it comes to a point where that cannot be the case.

So we have legislation that is before us. I look at the working conditions and wages of the people who are affected by this strike. I believe there should be a greater investment in the field of education, which would be reflected in the ultimate salaries and working conditions that people who are affected by these strikes would be involved with. I would want to see that happen. I hope the government will increase that investment in education and perhaps provide some more flexibility in the formula so that it allows the boards of education to reach collective agreements with their employees. But I go back to the fact that when you're faced with this responsibility, you have to make a choice, and it's often not a choice you want to make. If I had my druthers, I would rather not deal with this particular piece of legislation we have before us. I would rather not look at it as the necessity that it appears to be at this time.

I will be, as our party has made a decision, on the basis of "What would you do if you were stuck with this responsibility yourself in government?" not "What would you do when you're sitting in opposition?" and in this specific case that we have before us, it certainly gives the appearance of wanting those students back to work. I also want to see, as I said, an infusion of the kind of funding that is necessary to allow people who are affected by this strike to be able to receive a fairer share of the pie in the province of Ontario.

**Mr Sergio:** There are just a few minutes to pick up the debate on the motion that is in front of us. Really, what's it all about? It is bringing the kids back into the classrooms and getting on with the strike. I think everyone has had it. Three weeks is long enough. Three weeks have been testing the will not only of the students but the parents, the working people who, day in and day out, have to make arrangements for the kids who cannot be in the schools, let alone the condition of the schools.

To that principle, our leader, Dalton McGuinty, some time ago had put a good position which was acceptable to both sides. If that position would have been accepted by both sides of the House, we wouldn't be here tonight. It would have been a reasonable way of dealing with the issue before it came to this particular situation. Five minutes, Mr Speaker, are not enough to say why we are here, because I would have to go back to 1995 when the government started chopping, cutting down funds for public education in Ontario. But we are here dealing with a very important issue and that is to get the kids back into the classroom.

What is our situation? It is with the unions, with the employees, with the teachers, with the boards, but ultimately we have to consider the kids. I hear very little debate about the importance of looking after the kids, getting the kids back into a healthy educational environment in the classroom that is clean, that is healthy, that has the proper staff and that they get the necessary education that they should be getting, that they should have gotten in the past three weeks.

What does the government do? Well, I can't let the government really go scot-free on this one here, because



if they hadn't begun to create this wonderful crisis since 1995, we wouldn't be here. In all fairness I have to say that, yes, the workers of course need to be looked after, they need to make more money, they do deserve it. But ultimately it is the kids we have to think about, the quality of education, mostly year-ends, and that is the ultimate thing that we have to consider.

Our leader, Dalton McGuinty, proposed as late as yesterday binding arbitration, and we couldn't get that. We couldn't get this self-made agreement that the third party talks about. "Let them do it on their own. Let them come up with an agreement that is convenient, suitable and acceptable to all the sides." Dalton McGuinty's solution would have brought that agreement if we had got both sides of the House to agree on that. But we couldn't get it because, as usual, when this side of the House, the opposition, the Liberal side, comes up with reasonable solutions, they are not listened to, accepted, because they simply come from the opposition side.

We wouldn't be here today debating this, if you will, closure motion, so I hope that we can really take the interests of the kids to heart and get on with this particular situation. We'll be here to support it.

**Mr Caplan:** I certainly appreciate joining this debate on behalf of all the people of Don Valley East, the workers, the parents, the students. I don't want to cover a lot of the ground that has already been covered by my colleagues and other members, but I must say that this situation that we have in education today, the turmoil, the chaos, the continual unrest, is only going to continue because the root cause of the problem is the government's inflexibility. They put the funding into a particular envelope and the boards are not allowed to exceed that.

The other root of the problem is the inadequacy of funding. You cannot extract \$1.8 billion out of the educational system and not expect to have this kind of turmoil, chaos and constant disruption. It is not by any kind of accident. In fact, I believe that many of these events have been planned. The Minister of Labour and the other government members can write back-to-work legislation as often as they wish. This is the fourth time in six years that the Harris government has introduced back-to-work legislation in the educational sector. The New Democrats did it three times in the five years that they were government and the Liberals did it once when they were in government. But four times in six years, that's got to tell you something. There's a message there. There's a problem, and it's a pretty fundamental one.

I say to the government members, until you fix this problem or until we defeat you and we fix the problem, this kind of chaos, turmoil and disruption is going to continue and nobody benefits from it, not the children especially, but not any of us who depend on education, because education is the most key and fundamental investment we make. We do not gain from this. In fact, we're going backwards. Other countries are trying to build up their education system. In Ontario we only seem determined to tear ours down.

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I also wanted to comment a little bit on the events of yesterday because they were quite interesting. I've heard rationales from some folks to my left who tell me and the public that they made a mistake; they got hoodwinked; there was a problem there. You can't tell me that nine members in that caucus who have all been around this chamber for at least the last 10 years, some of them quite a bit more, don't know when to stand up and say no on a unanimous consent motion. You cannot tell me that they are that inexperienced—

**Mrs Marland:** You have to have heard it first, and you didn't hear it.

**Mr Caplan:** I say to the member from Mississauga South that I heard it. I know that she heard it. I know that other members here heard it. You cannot tell me they didn't hear what happened.

Then what was very interesting, it was a debatable motion and not one of them got up to debate it. You know, Speaker, the rules of procedure of this assembly and this chamber, and the New Democrats could have, if they wanted to, stood in their place and debated the motion brought forward by the House leader from the government.

**Mrs Marland:** True, but they were still in shock.

**Mr Caplan:** Perhaps they were in shock. I happen to believe something a little bit different. I say to the member from Mississauga South that I believe that the members of the New Democratic Party had enough pressure put upon them by their constituents that they decided what they were going to do was allow this legislation to go through. Then what they were going to do to try to save face was hold it up for one day.

It's the responsible thing to try to pass the legislation. It's a responsible thing to give speedy passage, which has happened in the cases when it was a previous Conservative government, a Liberal government, a New Democratic Party government, and certainly this government.

I don't think the New Democrats are as incompetent as they would have you believe they are. I believe that what they're trying to do is to have it both ways. I find it very interesting. I think it's very telling that today they've offered nothing new. They've acted in a manner that is quite out of character. I believe that all members of this House have an interest in doing the right thing, making sure the kids get back to school. I heard an argument that there had to be a finding of jeopardy. That wasn't the case back in the strike in Windsor when they were in government and that happened. So it is very interesting. I just wanted to point that out to the members of this House because of the collective experience, because of the knowledge and wisdom and because of, certainly, the episode and the spectacle that we've seen here today.

I will be supporting the legislation. I say, as a parent and as a member of the great community of Don Valley East, that I'm looking forward to the kids getting back to work and I'm looking forward also to the larger debate on the educational policies of this government, as wrong

and as misguided as they are. There is an alternative, one with a positive future. We have presented some of our plans. I look forward to the government presenting their plans and their vision for the future. That's what the debate in this House should be about. Thank you, Speaker, and I look forward to that time.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I was particularly interested in the comments of the member from St Catharines, and I understand why government backbenchers are inclined to support their own government's bills and motions. I was in government. It was many years ago. I too know the sting of the whip. I too have been intimidated by whips of various personalities over the course of years who forced me, compelled me to come to the House and vote according to the government's wishes. But that's where the member from St Catharines's argument is rather strange. It's one thing for a government backbencher to say, "Oh, but you don't understand. If I don't vote for this, the whip is going to get me. I won't get to go on any junkets. I won't get to be a P.A. I won't get to be a deputy, deputy, deputy something. I don't get the little payola, the grease." That's how whips in government run their caucuses. But the member from St Catharines is not in government. He's not being whipped. He doesn't have to satisfy his caucus—well, maybe he has to satisfy his caucus hierarchy. Maybe Mr McGuinty has cracked the whip. Maybe Mr McGuinty simply feels so committed to forcing workers back to work; maybe Mr McGuinty feels so committed to telling workers they have no rights, they don't have the right to collectively bargain; maybe the whip has been cracked. Mr Bradley should understand he's not in government now. He's free to do the right thing, not just what his government whip tells him. You're free now and you can do the right thing.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** It's really a historic day. I think we've heard some comments from the members of the official opposition that would support the premise, though what we're seeing here today is the death knell of the NDP in Ontario.

The suggestion that after the rousing electoral successes they had in 1995 and 1999, to the hear the quotes that have been made in the newspaper today, that they thought they'd pulled the wool over the eyes of the government—they thought they had finessed things; they didn't have to listen any more. The insufferable arrogance of a party of nine—sorry, eight; there's one member missing without leave. The fact that they would sit there today and belabour this debate ad nauseam, surely knowing that not one parent, particularly the Toronto members representing not one parent who wants their kids out of school—they are so irresponsible, unresponsive to the true needs of their constituency, prepared to belabour this debate knowing full well that when the official opposition rightly agrees with a suggestion that the back-to-work legislation is the way to go, that not only the math is against them but clearly the collective intelligence of the members in the Liberal Party have

come to the same conclusion: our kids must come first. It may be slogan, it may be great rhetoric for the union and for the NDP, but when the rubber hits the road, this is the result. They don't want the kids back in on Monday. They didn't want the kids back in for two Mondays. They'd introduce motions to delay and delay. The fact of the matter is, your arrogance got the better of you. Next time, pay attention. It's ironic, you of all people hoisted on your own petard by the standing orders. It's so fitting, the irony.

**Mr Duncan:** I listened attentively to my colleague from St Catharines's comments about the differing roles we play in the House when in government, when in opposition, and they're all important roles. We all play an important role in debate. But there are times in public life when you have to assess the situation. There are times when I have agreed with the New Democratic Party on issues, much to my chagrin and much to the chagrin of people who have elected me—

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** Even their back-to-work legislation.

**Mr Duncan:** Even their back-to-work legislation, as they've said. The only member of that caucus, and one must be fair in the debate, who's been consistent throughout is the member for Welland-Thorold. The bottom line here is, earlier today members of the third party said there was a deal in Windsor. That was factually incorrect. We satisfied ourselves to that effect, waited till we had done it. We checked our facts and satisfied ourselves to that.

Mr Bradley, the member for St Catharines, has properly pointed out, in my view, that it is better to be consistent and do what is right when you've made an assessment of a range of circumstances.

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Again I say to the members of the government, because the third party really isn't relevant to public life any more in this province, there will be a debate on education. We differ very strongly. You know that; we know that. We'll debate it in this chamber. We will debate it in an election. I am quite prepared to do that. At the end of the day we will differ and the people of this province will make a determination. What is important is that that debate happens, but our kids can be in school while that's happening.

None of us wants to be here. I don't believe the government wants to be here doing this. I don't want to be doing this. I know the New Democrats don't want to do this. It's just unfortunate that they are so darn inconsistent over time.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions? The Chair recognizes the member for Toronto-Davenport.

**Ms Churley:** The NDP caucus says to the member from St Catharines, throw off your shackles. Break rank. This is your opportunity to do it. Come on, Jim, let's go. The member for St Catharines knows that this bill is wrong, that the draconian elements in this bill around arbitration are not on and that the Liberal caucus is wrong in supporting the government on this.



I would say to the member for Don Valley East that he gave a very good speech at the beginning, but what he did then was dishonest in the worst degree. What he did was make—I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Duncan:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

**Ms Churley:** I've withdrawn it.

**The Acting Speaker:** There is some talking back and forth, so I'm sorry, I didn't hear the remark, nor did I hear the retraction, although I'm assured that it's there. So the point of order is finished.

I did want to say that I apologize for the name of your riding, because I think I said Toronto-Davenport and it's Toronto-Danforth. I recognize the member for Toronto-Danforth.

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, may I have my time put on? I'll say it later and it will be even worse.

**The Acting Speaker:** I might want to explain why, and that is that the time of life goes on. We cannot stop it. Unless I see a very compelling reason to stop the clock, I'm not inclined to do so.

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I would like to at least attempt to get my time back, and let me tell you why. I very quickly withdrew a comment that you didn't hear, even before you asked me to do it. I didn't think it was that bad, but nonetheless I withdrew it. Then the Liberal House leader stood on his feet anyway and interrupted after I withdrew the remark. I think most people would agree that it would be only fair to allow me to have my time when I did stand on my feet immediately and withdrew.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to rule on this one first.

**Mrs Marland:** She withdrew right away.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry, I do not take debate on points of order.

The member for Toronto-Danforth has asked for a ruling. I will make sure that you get sufficient time between now and 1 o'clock or 2 o'clock in the morning to say nearly all of the things you will want to say. Let me assure you of that.

The member for the Liberal caucus has two minutes to respond.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: It isn't directly related to the member for Toronto-Danforth's point of order; it's more challenging the Chair. Sitting right behind her is the member from Sault Ste Marie, who has had absolutely no respect for the Chair. So if there's anything to be learned from there and this process tonight, they have no respect for the House or the people of this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The member for the Liberal caucus has two minutes.

**Mr Sergio:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm asking for unanimous consent—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I want to be able to hear and I can't. The Chair recognizes the member for York East.

**Mr Sergio:** York West. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I ask for unanimous consent to allow the member from Danforth another 10 minutes to finish her presentation.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for York West seeks unanimous consent for the member for Toronto-Danforth for another 10 minutes. Is it agreed? It is not agreed.

The member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** I appreciate the interventions of the various members who have chosen to intervene. I hold this up for members of the House, because this is the record. This is what tells us what we did when we were in government—not what we did when we were in opposition; what we did when we were in government.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to remind some of you—I had trouble hearing the member for Toronto-Danforth before; now I seem to have no trouble hearing you, when you're not in your seat.

**Mr Bradley:** I see sitting here this evening at least four members of the Bob Rae government, of the cabinet. The leader was a member of the cabinet as well, as were others. These are individuals—five of them—who, when they had the responsibility, in Lambton, in East Parry Sound and in Windsor, on every occasion ordered workers back to work, people who were involved in a legal strike. It's not because they wanted to; I'm sure they did not want to. They did when they were in power. When it was within their jurisdiction, when they had full control, a majority government, they chose to order people back to work with back-to-work legislation, in one case without jeopardy.

They also passed a piece of legislation, again, which was the social contract. It abrogated, it ripped up, every collective agreement in the public sector. I always believed that the party believed very much in the sanctity of the collective agreement. In the circumstances they faced, the government felt they had to bring in that piece of legislation. I voted against that legislation. I did vote with them on other pieces of legislation which ended some particular disputes.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Marchese:** Madam Elliott, you were very unkind not to allow my colleague to speak for two minutes.

Bon soir, les citoyens de l'Ontario, et bienvenue. Good citizens of Ontario, welcome to the political forum. We are on live, just in case you don't know. It's not a repeat. We're on live to deal with a very, very important issue.

I want to say to the Liberals that I'm afraid St Peter is not going to let them through the gates of heaven. I'm worried for them.

**Mr Duncan:** Now he's God.

**Mr Bisson:** Right on. That's the first good one you've had all day.

2030

**Mr Marchese:** Member for St Catharines, just to remind you, on many occasions you've said, "Don't forget who the enemy is." The enemy, you often said, is

over there. You said that over and over again, and tonight you make the argument—I understand that in government you are forced at times to do certain things, but you are in opposition and you can do the right thing. You can do the right thing. You can and ought to have done the right thing in this regard, member from St Catharines, and you didn't. You, like us, have an opportunity to stand up and indeed debate the issues, but what you are doing in defence, as you skulk away from dealing with this issue, is you point the hand on the other side to the New Democrats. Why? Because you are afraid, presumably, of what we stand for and what we represent. Why else would you constantly make reference to the New Democrats and what they stand for or believe in except if you obviously are afraid of the things we are debating and speaking for and on behalf of.

I am worried about the position you are taking publicly, saying the enemy is somehow the New Democrats on this issue. I'm saying no, Jim, the enemy tonight is two: them and you. Because, I argue, while there might have been some people here who yesterday—and I was one of them. I admit that I was one of the few people in this House who, through 30 seconds or 15 seconds of negligence, let that vote go. I admit publicly I was guilty. But you, Jimmy, were here, and you, Mr Duncan, were here, and the member from Don Valley East, good God, was here. They all had an opportunity, if they wanted, to say no to, "Do we have unanimous consent for...?" They were as excited as the government that there was, here in this part, a moment of negligence, and I suspect they were drooling at the mouth at the prospect of what might be accrued to them in terms of political interests, they thought.

So the Tories are not the only ones drooling tonight with excitement, with satisfaction. In fact, they're seething with arrogance and smugness. Did you see the Minister of Labour, how he speaks about these issues? It's with utter dismissiveness of the entire 13,000 people who have been out there for four weeks—entire dismissiveness.

**Mr Kormos:** He doesn't like working people. He doesn't like workers.

**Mr Marchese:** Neither does he appear to like working people, because he makes no reference to them, nor the member from Kitchener, who today read a quote from the Toronto Sun speaking of a young man 18 years old. I wouldn't be a party to such a statement.

**Mr Kormos:** The member for Kitchener was elitist.

**Mr Marchese:** The member for Kitchener read an article from the Toronto Sun of an 18-year-old whose view is the following: "I have no respect for workers for asking for more money because they are so unskilled." The fact that the member for Kitchener read that, said that implicitly, I argue, if not explicitly, is endorsing the position of this 18-year-old. This man—any individual on the other side would have known better, given the experience all of you have had over the years, at least if you feel it not to say it. Don't articulate those ideas, because you don't look good. It doesn't look good on any of you, and when one member says it, it reflects on all of

you. The fact that he seemed to have approval for it, because he had the article in front of him, must have been to a great extent endorsed by many of you. I'm telling you, Mr Wettlaufer, it's not appropriate for you to be saying that, because these people here don't feel very kindly toward you having made such remarks. They think they're valued workers and I think they're valued workers in the educational system. There's not one student—

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I can't remember offhand what the standing order on this is, but I believe it is quite unparliamentary to allude to another member in the House as saying that he or she said something when he or she was actually quoting someone else in a newspaper or document.

**The Acting Speaker:** I have a problem with that standing order too. I looked and looked for it and I couldn't find it. That's not a point of order.

The Chair recognizes the member for Trinity-Spadina, unless the member for Niagara Centre wants a point of order.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr Marchese:** When we use quotations from any source, we are endorsing them. "We're not saying we are saying it. Someone else is saying it." But if we use the quotation, it's as if we're saying it. We are the porta voce of a quotation. We implicitly—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** If you read it, you read it with a purpose. You knew what you were doing; you knew what you were saying. You ought not to have said it, because it's insulting. You're belittling these folks and all the 13,000 people, you are, sorry, you and the others, all of them. They are valued members who deserve decent pay for the work they do and that's what they've been fighting for for four weeks. I don't understand it.

Everyone, in my humble view, is a skilled individual who performs a job. While some of you may not want to be secretaries or caretakers, others do. They are valued jobs here and deserve to be well paid. That's why they're out on strike, because they feel they're entitled to a fair settlement. If the teachers were able to settle for 8%—4% each year—they feel they ought to get the same, and I agree with them.

So in my view, once the board of education made a settlement, they knew or ought to have known, as the language goes in legal circles, that they would argue for the same settlement. I would. They knew that would be coming, so they ought to have made provision for such a settlement to happen. If you can't make an exact kind of agreement, you'd certainly better come close to it or you ought to be prepared to come awfully close to it. I'm on their side.

In fact, I urge the board of education to fight you, because I believe you're the enemy. You have waged war on the board of education in Toronto and across Ontario.



You have waged war against teachers and non-teachers alike. I say to the board, this is war. It's not a matter of saying we don't have enough money. I am saying to you that if you don't have enough money, it's because they have underfunded you and you have to go after the government. You can't say we don't have enough money, "Sorry, we can't give you a raise." You have to go after the government and say, "You have underfunded us for years." Where does it begin? It begins with Bill 160. There's always a beginning to everything. You people have decided—

**Mr Wettlaufer:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This relates to my previous point of order. I believe you will find that the order is 23(i) on page 20 of the standing orders, in which the member is imputing false or unavowed motives to another member. That is exactly what he is doing in my case.

**The Acting Speaker:** I have located 23(i). It wasn't appropriate to the comments made by the member for Trinity-Spadina, so I did not think that it was the right order. That is not a point of order. I wouldn't want you to think that I was questioning my ruling on the other one. We'll proceed. I'd like the member for Trinity-Spadina to go on with his speech.

**Mr Marchese:** Thank you, Speaker. It all begins with Bill 160. The underfunding begins with that bill. What does Bill 160 do? Bill 160 was designed to take money out of the educational system.

**Mrs Marland:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We understand that the bill before us this evening is Bill 13. This member is now debating Bill 160, which in fact is law. It's not before this House at this time.

2040

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point of order, and I will ask the member from Trinity-Spadina to bring his comments into the bill that we're debating. I'm sure he will, with all his skill and endeavour, try to achieve that.

**Mr Marchese:** You're quite right, Speaker. That's my intent. Thank you. The real story is underfunding, which is the cause of this dispute. Bill 160 is directly connected to this issue, Speaker.

Why did this government introduce Bill 160 a long, long time ago? They did so as a way of centralizing control of our educational system and our educational dollars. That's why I've often said you people are good, because you know what you're doing. You knew exactly what you were doing when you centralized education financing. While it is contrary to your political philosophy and ideology of centralizing more and more in central control, you decided that this particular issue was in your best interests, because, you remember, you were the people to constantly say, "We have too much government, and government is too big." Through Bill 160, you decided that it was in your best interests to get the boards out of collecting the education taxes so you could do it. Once you have control of the finances, what happens? Of course you take money out. How much money do you take out? You take a billion and a half or more. Taking a billion and a half, good citizens of Ontario, is a whole lot

of money. It's not like a couple of pennies, a couple of dollars, a couple of thousand dollars. We're talking \$1 billion. Most of you can't even imagine how many zeroes there are in that number. There are a whole lot of zeroes after that one, and it affects directly our educational system, both teaching and non-teaching alike.

Do you know what these fine people did, good citizens? I'm not sure that sometimes we can follow all the details. Who can, except the lawyers in this wonderful bureaucracy of ours controlled by the Tories? They have invented two kinds of categories. They call them "teaching" and "non-teaching." "Teaching" is one of the few things that they fund—teachers in the classroom—and "non-teaching" are the things that they don't really care much about. "Non-teaching" includes all the kinds of people who have been involved in the strike with CUPE 4400. It involves secretaries. I know, and I suspect many of you believe, that secretaries are important people in our schools. All of you were kids once, I think. I'm convinced you must have gone through the educational system, and if you have a memory you might recall how useful and important they were to the educational system.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** Were you a bad boy then?

**Mr Marchese:** No, I was a good boy. I think I only got strapped once, John. I wasn't bad.

**Mrs Marland:** Where?

**Mr Marchese:** Oh, where, really—just up the street, very close.

Secretaries are important people. I'm sure, John, you as a teacher would know. You would agree; I'm convinced you would. No dispute. Librarians, I'm sure, John, you would consider as teachers, as you in your—

**Mr Hastings:** I was one, so I ought to know.

**Mr Marchese:** John is doubtful about that, but I argue that teachers are important people in our education system.

We're talking about dealing with a new economy and we're talking about some students not doing well in the literacy tests, and you people through your underfunding, through the so-called non-classroom dissection, have underfunded that sector to the extent that we have fewer and fewer librarians. But you say our students are not doing well, and we argue that librarians are a key component of the literacy of our students, and that if there are fewer libraries or if libraries are open to a lesser extent than they used to be, that means kids have less access to trained people in the schools and trained librarians in the communities. They're a key part of it. The fact that you people downloaded so much to the city has forced them to cut \$130 million, and many libraries have been closed and the hours of libraries have been diminished. So I make that point. I'm saying they're important people. How can you people—Frank, I know you're bored. I can tell. How can you people think that you can continue to cut and not affect the educational system? How can you not understand? Why, with any simple little intelligence you can deduce or come to the conclusion that librarians are a key part of the literacy of our stu-

dents. They need access to books. They need librarians to show them around in the library. They need to tell them how important it is. They need to show them how to reference so many things that are needed, without whose help they're going to have a hell of a time finding what they need to do their research for the papers they need to write.

We have fewer physical education teachers, we have fewer music teachers now than we did, all the things that we think and that many parents believe are important. Caretakers have been drastically reduced in the Catholic and public systems. Hundreds and hundreds of workers have been fired and schools are dirty. I have often said that many teachers have seen more rats and mice than ever. Under your careful and good watch, Frankie, we've got more rats than we've ever seen and known before. I don't know how you do it. Maybe he likes rats. Maybe there's some strong affiliation to rats and amphibians; I don't know. But you seem to thrive on the dirt and the mess that's in the schools. You guys again in your smugness and arrogance don't see that we've got a problem in our school system. Frankie, come on. You've got to talk to John, who is a schoolteacher. He would know how, in the absence of caretakers, we've got a serious problem in our school system. They are dirty now, Frankie, unlike ever before, and it's not good.

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** Rosie, get on the speech: Bill 13.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Hon Mr Klees:** We're not debating the zoo here.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. We don't refer to each other by our first names. We use the riding. If you want to take a few seconds and just get the ridings of the members you would like to refer to, I'd make that a request.

**Mr Marchese:** Thank you, Speaker. Member for Oak Ridges, I'm sure you know these things, I don't have to tell you, but I need to articulate them for the benefit of the good citizens who are watching and the few taxpayers, as you call them, for their benefit, to elucidate because they have so little information sometimes.

All these non-teaching people, school community advisors they call them—they used to be called school community relations workers—people who would outreach in their communities to bring them into the school system so that parents would be more actively involved—some of these people have been let go. These are important people we have in the system. While we talk about parental participation and we all say how wonderful parental participation is, without school community relations workers we can't get the parents in. Yes, the middle-class professionals are involved in the schools, but many others, who don't have the degrees, are less involved in our educational system, and it's for that reason that they hired for many years school community advisors, and before that, school community relations workers—important people in the system.

You would know some of them, members for Mississauga South and East. You would know, because I think you know some of them. You've met them at some of the

meetings you and I have been at. Walter Lopes is one of them, Martha Broom is another one, two people you would know very well. These are the people we're talking about who are actively trying to get a fair settlement. They've been saying they're having a hard time getting a fair settlement because the money that comes from the province is inadequate. Some of your Conservative trustee friends are saying, "We don't have enough money." So they're playing your song. They know the words and they dance to the same tune. These folks out there ought not to be supporting you but ought to be supporting them, because they are accountable to them, not to you. That's why I'm so deeply offended by many of the trustees at the Toronto board, with the exception of those who have proudly stood by these workers to get a fair settlement, and there are quite a number of them too.

**2050**

I'm proud of all these people who stood out there for four weeks, day in and day out, walking the streets, with a lot of support from our communities, and teachers and non-teachers alike. I'm sure they feel good about all the support they've been getting over the weeks. I think it's because of that support that they have managed to find the determination and strength to stay out.

Bill 160 has robbed our school system of money it needed, and you robbed it in good economic times. I find that reproachable and reprehensible, because you didn't have to take the money out. You had \$10 billion, \$12 billion in your pocket and you gave it all away, with the compliance of the Liberals who refused to say in the 1999 election, "We would take money away from those who earn over \$80,000 who don't need it." They refused to say it. Yet day in and day out, Liberals would rail against you having taken money out of essential services to give away to people who would pocket it in RRSPs and stocks and bonds and who knows what else to fancy their pleasures, while other people who make \$20,000, \$30,000, \$35,000 haven't had the benefit of all those billions of dollars you've doled out—none of the benefits.

When you downloaded other responsibilities by taking half of the education taxes out of the property tax base, you dumped so much on to the city that it has bankrupted the entire city of Toronto. But the other half of the taxes you have left now, and you might have heard your buddy city Councillor Oates, who decries the fact that there was an increase in the education taxes of 8.6%.

**Mrs Marland:** Isn't it Ootes?

**Mr Marchese:** Ootes, I beg your pardon. Thank you very much.

**Mrs Marland:** And I'm from Mississauga. I wouldn't know all the—

**Mr Marchese:** But you are so good, Margaret; you folks are so good and you've been around, and you know your friends very well, because you're like this, right? Tories stand together.

Councillor Ootes was so vehemently against what this government has done because he expected a break. So while education has been equalized across Ontario, in



Toronto it's much higher because of the property reassessment, property values having been reassessed and having gone up in the city of Toronto. As a result of that, there is a bigger chunk of our money that is taken out for the purposes of education: 8.6%. The city councillors were livid, and that money is going out of Toronto into other areas. Man, are they livid here in Toronto. I hope M. Ootes gives you a call from time to time.

**Mr Kormos:** Are you sure its Ootes?

**Mr Marchese:** I think it's Ootes. It's a good question. I apologize to him if I'm not pronouncing it correctly. It doesn't matter except I've apologized in the event that I haven't got it right.

Bill 174 is another bill that has caused a great deal of chaos and havoc and—

**Mr Kormos:** Grief.

**Mr Marchese:** —oh, grief, displeasure, anger, disillusionment. There are so many things I could say about what Bill 174 has done, but three things: they increased the teaching load, which has forced teachers to give more of their time to teach more students, which has provided savings to this government of anywhere from about 1,000 to 2,000 teachers. Millions of dollars of savings, that's what it was all about. But the government, M<sup>me</sup> Ecker in her mendacious ways—

**Mr Kormos:** Mendacious?

**Mr Marchese:** Yes—has found it in her heart to say, "What we're really doing is to give teachers more time with students." It wasn't that at all, and many have caught on, because what they have done is to have the same number of teachers teach more students. Boy, has that tired and exhausted the teachers to the extent that they have not been able to do extracurricular activities—not co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities.

**Hon Mr Clark:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Standing order 23(b), "In a debate, a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she: (b) directs his or her speech to matters other than: (i) the question under discussion ...."

The bill is Bill 13. He has now been speaking about Bill 160 and Bill 174 and he's dealing with facts that are pertaining to those bills and not Bill 13.

**The Acting Speaker:** I was listening carefully to the member for Trinity-Spadina and, yes, he is bringing other information in, but he is in general, I think, covering the bill. So, yes, that is a point of order. I'll listen very carefully to make sure he continues on the path of Bill 13.

**Mr Marchese:** Thank you for your kindness, Speaker. You realize that I'm rolling it all in. That's the point. Everything is interconnected. People always try to compartmentalize things. "We can't talk about this because that's not connected to that." They're all connected. All these folks are in the educational system and it's all connected. Bill 74 has caused so much grief for teachers that they are on side with non-teaching personnel. They're on side with support staff because they know what it's like to get beaten up and whacked from one corner to the other day in and day out.

**The Acting Speaker:** I wanted to intervene on the term "whacked." I don't think it will lead progressively to better relations in this chamber and so on. It has a different meaning to some people than others. I think it would be better if we found other terms.

**Mr Marchese:** Speaker, I'm not quite sure what you mean by that. I've used this word "whack" for, I don't know, the last five years. Have you all of a sudden come to the conclusion that this—

**The Acting Speaker:** I assume that you wanted my answer on that.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes.

**The Acting Speaker:** Quite recently I was made aware of its meaning in other cultures. So I would ask that you maybe don't use it.

**Mr Marchese:** I speak French relatively well. I speak Italian pretty well. I speak some Portuguese and a lot of Spanish. We're connected to a lot of cultures. I'm not quite sure which one you're referring to. I know there are a lot of cultures in Toronto. But "whack" just means to beat people up. It's like giving them a whole whack to the backside, to the head, whatever; just generally speaking, being beaten up. That's really what it means: getting bruised up, beaten up. It's more or less synonymous with all these other words. But I'm sure the Speaker is working on something here. Maybe I'll give him an opportunity to—very good, Speaker. Thank you very much. That's good.

So the modus operandi of this government has been to find victims in society. Welfare recipients have been one. Boy, have they whacked these people up and down. The street kids, the squeegee kids, boy, have they whacked those kids up and down the block, day in and day out. They're always looking for someone to beat up. They've been beating up teachers and now they're beating up the support staff in the same way. That is the modus operandi of this government.

**2100**

I've been thinking about this over the last couple of days, but particularly today. Why this anger against teachers and non-teachers alike, against unions in general? Why? I have concluded once again that you have gone back to your 1995 roots, where you were going to take a tough stand because you've got to lead, and someone has to do that. Unfortunately, the Liberals have decided to follow you on that one and I think it's sad. Again, I hope St Peter lets one or two of them in, but I doubt it very much. I think, good citizens of Ontario, that they have decided once again to go after an enemy, isolate them and reach out to some of you for support.

They have gone after teachers for one specific reason alone, and that is that they think they are a good target and they believe they have 40% of the public that agrees with them. I suspect there are a lot of you who believe that teachers are overpaid and underworked. They know that. They know that's the gut feeling out there and that's why they're going after teachers under the guise of, "We are changing the curriculum; we are improving the report cards; we are testing teachers." That's another good one.

They know, good citizens of Ontario, that if they say, "We're going to test teachers and what's wrong with that?" 40% of you are probably saying in your gut, "Yes, what's wrong with that?" They don't want you to think about it. They don't want to tell you that there has been, in my mind and in history, any connection to any study that has ever been done that could help teachers.

The point I make is that you're beating everybody up, and now you're beating up this poor union that's been going after a fair settlement for four weeks. So you are going to be tough. I heard the minister today, "Someone has got to lead. We need a tough leader and a tough government that's going to actually do the job." It's the language of 1995. No more Mr Nice Guy. Remember Mike a couple of years ago, when he said he was changing a leaf and he was going to be Mr Nice Guy? Well, not any longer. Mike has been retrained and re-educated in a way that suggests to me that they have found their revolutionary zeal to go after the unions and their members. It's sad, profoundly, because the Toronto board of education today came here around 1 o'clock, a board representative, with the union, presenting to this government—and we helped to deliver it—a proposal that would have solved that particular situation in Toronto in a way that would say to you, government, "Don't get involved; get off our backs." The chair of the Toronto board said today in the scrum, "Why are we doing this? Because this is our way. This solves the issue our way."

What is it about what they have said that you just don't quite comprehend? Is it a matter of passing a literacy test on the other side? Is it a matter of passing a test to answer a simple question, "What is it about that thing that you don't understand?" The board said, "We want to do it our way." Not your way, but theirs. Today the board and the union came together. They didn't come separately. They came together, saying, "We have a deal here, we have a suggestion to the government and we want you to change the act, Bill 13, make an amendment in a way that would allow the board and the union to go through a binding arbitration process." However unsavoury to the union it was, that's what they proposed.

So I say to you, I can't understand why you're rejecting that. I've heard Minister Ecker come to us and say, "No, we can't do it." Why? "It's too long. The proposal put to us is too long." How long was it? I think they said it was 11 pages.

Have you seen the number of bills we deal with that you people have put before us? You put bills before us with such short notice that are this thick. Many of them are 100 pages. Some of them are longer than that. You people seem to be able to sort that out even though you make mistake after mistake, incompetence after incompetence, and you have bills to correct other bills. You've dealt with these things before. Surely you have many lawyers. It's not just one lawyer you have in your offices; you've got many lawyers you can call from the Ministry of Education, whom you can call from the Ministry of Labour to give you a hand so that you can sort out any

complexity there might be in it. Many of you have lawyers in your own caucus. I'm sure you could get their help if you really wanted to. But you've got enough lawyers to not have to bother your own.

But you refused them, and that's why I'm particularly incensed by it. Their proposal would put children back to school on Monday. Why? Because there's agreement. The two parties said, "If we both do this, we will agree to bring children back." That means there's a buy-in from both sides. That means the workers are saying, "OK, our union has negotiated this with the board, we're willing to support it and we'll have the kids in school." So they came to negotiate with you, and you say, "We can't." We're trying to negotiate with you until the wee hours of the night—it's 9:06 right now—and you're saying, "We can't. We don't have enough time." How much time do you need to deal with 11 pages?

You have a buy-in from these guys, from the board and the union, from the workers, who are saying, "We don't like binding arbitration, but we hate your bill even more, to the extent that we're willing to find the energy to go into the schools on the weekend, if we have to, and clean them." But if you tell them, "Sorry, we don't like it; we're going to impose our bill on you," these people are not going to clean the schools, because they won't find the energy. I have to tell you that I wouldn't find the energy to go and clean a school under duress, with a bill that overrides any efforts other people have made. I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't go back on a weekend, no matter whether you paid me time and a half or double time to clean those schools. So when you people say, "The students will be in those schools Monday," they will not. You might wish it so, but wishing it so will not make it happen, *Monsieur le ministre*. It won't happen. Unless those schools are cleaned, they're not fit to be habitated by individuals.

**Mrs Marland:** You're not threatening now, are you, Rosario, that they won't come back to work to prove a point or they won't be cleaned to prove a point?

**Mr Marchese:** No. But, Madame from Mississauga South, you would know that it's human nature. We all have enough human nature in us to understand what I'm about to say.

**Mrs Marland:** They're fed up, and they want to get back to work.

**Mr Marchese:** No, they're saying, "We have come to an agreement," and if we do, they committed themselves to making sure the kids are back in school. "But if, through your bill, you order us to go back, you may not find us in a state, in a physiological position to find the energy to do the work." I think it's easy to understand. Citizens, you would know, where Tory MPPs and Liberals wouldn't, that if somebody is beating you up, you're not about to get up and say, "OK, I'm going to do it." The very next day, when you leave, I'm going to be on that floor saying, "I don't have any energy. They beat me up. I'm so badly bruised I can't get up." Right? It's not a threat; it's just human nature. I'm just explaining to you what I would do. But I can't comprehend why you



people have not been able to find lawyers to sort out 11 pages of information. I can't.

While the deal would have put kids back on Monday and your bill does not, I'm not sure how you can claim that we want kids to be in those schools right away, when your bill may not accomplish that end, while their proposal does. You're rejecting that, versus your stated appeal that you want kids back to school. I have to tell you, you contradict your stated intentions when you say, "We want the board and the union to come to an agreement." Minister of Labour and Minister Ecker said that continually: "Do you think we like this? We want them to solve it." They come today to solve it and what do you say? "I don't know. We don't have the time to deal with it. Sorry." It's pretty dumb, right? It's dumb, it's childish, it's stupid. Again, I guess, it's your *modus operandi*. You're going to hang in tough, eh, Minister Ecker? You're going to hang in tough, because "We've got to be strong," right? You've got to show the unions how strong—

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I'm the wimpy one, remember? Don't you read the columns in the newspaper?  
2110

**Mr Marchese:** No, you're not so wimpy. I know they say that of you, but I don't believe them.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** You don't?

**Mr Marchese:** I don't. I think you're a tough woman. I see you in the scrums. You're pretty tough. Maybe you're not tough in cabinet, I don't know. But as I see you in the public, you're tough. I tell Mike that; I tell M. Harris that.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I need it in writing?

**Mr Marchese:** I'm saying it to about 100,000 people watching today. Please, trust me.

Again, your stated intention was that you wanted these people to settle, and then they settled and you say, "Sorry, can't do it." I'm a bit puzzled by your reaction today, except to suggest you people want to be tough as a way of showing you still have the strength to beat these people up and you want your 40% of the public to say, "Right on." But you're not dealing with teachers here today. You're not dealing with teachers. It's not the same crowd. You're dealing with people who make, what, \$25,000, \$30,000. You surely don't have an audience out there that says, "We've got to get these people back to work. They're overpaid." I can't believe you're going to use that argument, because that's hardly an argument you can use. They're not overpaid; they're underpaid. They're not teachers. You can treat them differently. If you want to, you can. I suggest and argue that you can and ought to be treating them differently.

I don't know what to make of the fact that you folks are continually making reference to what we have done as New Democrats. Mr Bradley from St Catharines has made reference on a number of occasions to three agreements we made.

**Hon Mr Clark:** It's on the record.

**Mr Marchese:** It's on the record, absolutely. The NDP ordered back-to-school legislation twice on a dec-

laration of jeopardy. There was a declaration of jeopardy, as you know. You know that.

**Mr Bradley:** Because you wanted them back to work.

**Mr Marchese:** On a declaration of jeopardy. I think that's a different matter. We were talking, in those days, about 40 or 44 days. These people have moved the threshold.

On the third example, in Windsor—indeed there was not a declaration of jeopardy—it was passed and proclaimed but never put in effect because they negotiated a settlement. If I recall, they had been out for 29 days in that instance in Windsor.

**Mr Duncan:** It's 26 days in Windsor today.

**Mr Marchese:** Twenty-six, give or take, and they were teachers. These folks here—I'll just get back to that, and I want to make the point that 26 days in Windsor—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** Hold on, Duncan, please, let me speak. Give me a break. So 26 days; it was December 17. Kids were out of school, I think, that day or the next, right? Then, of course, with Christmas break they were able to settle that one. But the Liberals continually make reference to that as a way, I argue—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** —sorry, Jim—of skulking away from the responsibility you have today.

**Mr Bradley:** When you were in power, what did you do?

**Mr Marchese:** You are in opposition today, Jim, and the enemy is over there. But why are you forgetting that you are in opposition, Jim, member from St Catharines?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, because I believe that you folks, who have been arguing how closely connected you are to working men and women, would have done them a favour and said, "We're on your side," because the enemy's over there.

**Mr Bradley:** I voted against the social contract.

**Mr Marchese:** I know that, but I'm talking about today, Jimmy. I am saying today—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** Sorry, I've made reference to the fact that I admit that in two situations it was a declaration of jeopardy—40 to 44 days, a long time. You people have moved the threshold where now we're talking about 13 days, 15 days. You have moved it.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** What are you talking about? You have moved the goalpost to the extent that it's no longer what it used to be in terms of 40 or 44 days. Now jeopardy, for you and the people you appointed—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** What is it, Minister? Will you stand up and do your two minutes? Where is he from? Stoney Creek. Member for Stoney Creek, you've got two minutes. Please use them wisely. You've got the time to stand up and make some arguments. My God, look. There are six of you. Stand up and take your time. Defend yourselves to the good citizens of Ontario, and if

not with the citizens, defend yourselves to your crowd—the taxpayers, right? Come on, stand up and have some courage. Don't just blah, blah, blah there in your seat. Speak from your heart. Get up and spend a couple of minutes and defend yourselves, because they don't know what you think. Defend yourself. Stand up, member for Stoney Creek. You too, Mr Newman, stand up. You're here, member for Scarborough Southwest. You've got to let them know what you think. It's about time, because I haven't heard one peep from you, not one little word, in the whole evening you've been here. I want to hear from you, they want to hear from you and the taxpayers want to hear from you. They want to know what you're thinking. Often, you people don't speak from the heart. Mr Stockwell does, and he does it with a great deal of arrogance. He does it well. He's good. He's very good. He's so proud of his style. He's so proud of the fact that he's going to be tough. He's going to send these people packing, with their tails tucked underneath, and hope for the best.

I'm telling you, your bill permits the discussion of everything. Everything is on the table, versus the kind of agreement the board and the union have put together. The arbitrator they agreed to would not deal with everything but would deal only with things that were unsettled by the two parties. Your bill says—and the member for Stoney Creek smiles. I'm going to wait for you. I'm waiting for you to speak to this bill.

I'm saying to you that Bill 13 says everything is on the table, and the agreement by the board and the union says only some things will be arbitrated, not everything. That's vitally different. It says two different things. The member for Stoney Creek, I know you haven't had time to read the bill, but that's what it says.

One of the fundamental unfairnesses of the particular bill is that you people name an arbitrator in the bill. That has never been done, that I'm aware of. It's a fundamental principle, accepted by many, that when you try and settle a dispute because there are disagreements between the two parties, you can't have someone put there by this government where the other two parties have had no say. It might be that they don't trust this person. The point of the two parties agreeing on an arbitrator is to have some level of trust, some level of confidence that that individual will deal with them fairly. That's what it's about. The reason we're opposed and that the two parties are opposed is because they don't know what they're getting. I don't know this individual. Maybe the union knows these two individuals you've named and maybe the board does. I don't know them. But it doesn't matter, because the principle is that where there is profound disagreement between two parties—and there have been disagreements for four weeks that have not been dealt with—it means you need an arbitrator who is agreeable to both.

The union stated in its press conference, the union member at the press conference said—what did he say? You think you know what he said? You don't know what he said because you weren't there. He said that this bill

ought to be amended in order for them to be able to get both sides to have this binding arbitration, without which they can't proceed. They are opposed to your bill because it does things they do not agree with. Both the board and the union have said, "We want to do it our way and we don't want to put everything on the table. We don't want to put everything on the table, and everything will be negotiated under the terms of Bill 13."

**2120**

To the Liberals, I don't know. The whole evening you have been talking about what the NDP did while they were in government and what the NDP did yesterday. I want to remind you continually this evening that you have a responsibility as an opposition party to support the right thing. I believe, as you argue, that the funding formula is fundamentally unfair. That ought to be the basis for you to say that these people are not getting a fair settlement as a result. That ought to be a fair way to approach this issue. It's not right for you to claim, as the member from Don Valley did, that this arbitrator is a good guy. Sorry. That doesn't cut it. I accept your argument when you say the funding formula has made it difficult for these people to negotiate a fair settlement and, you're right, has caused the crisis in the educational system both for teachers and non-teachers alike. We agree in that regard. That ought to be sufficient for you to oppose this bill. I tell you, if it is not sufficient and you then argue that it's OK for the minister to appoint an arbitrator who may or may not even be qualified, that is fundamentally wrong. You ought not to be, as the Liberal Party, associated with that. You shouldn't. It's dumb. You're setting a precedent. You're setting a bad precedent for yourselves because you're going to have to deal with that in the future because you guys are aspiring to government, waiting in a hurry to get there.

I tell you those arguments are inadequate, indefensible, and will be attacked by the majority of these 13,000 people, many of whom support you guys. Dare I say that I suspect—I could be wrong—that there are a lot of members who voted for the Liberal Party.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** There are. Dare I venture 50%, probably? We don't know.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Member from St Catharines, we don't know how many voted for you. It's in question here. There's some doubt.

**Mr Kormos:** It's a secret ballot.

**Mr Marchese:** Because it's a secret ballot; you're quite right. But you see, I have a good sense, having been in these communities—

**Mr Kormos:** You have a nose for these things.

**Mr Marchese:** Not really a nose, but gut instincts. Not just gut instincts, but we've talked to some of these workers, right? They like the Liberals because they find that middle-of-the-road kind of politics, you know, that vacillating politics—they say it's swell.

Speaker, can you please check for quorum? I don't have enough of an audience here.





NDP, which has chosen to back the unions and put children second instead of putting children first. I guess getting their union contributions into their war chest for the election is far more important than standing up for the hard-working families of Ontario.

People are not pointing fingers at the government, they're not pointing fingers at the school board, they're not pointing fingers at the union, but they are pointing fingers the NDP for keeping our kids out of school.

2130

**Mr Duncan:** I wanted to have an opportunity to respond to the member for Trinity-Spadina with reference to two specific comments he made about who the enemy is here. Again, I want to reiterate that I've maintained dialogue with both sides in the dispute in Windsor over a number of weeks and satisfied myself that a local solution wasn't possible.

Earlier today, members in the third party said there was a solution. I was ecstatic to hear that and then waited till I could speak to the appropriate parties on both sides and determined that in fact that wasn't the case.

The enemy here is anybody who wants to keep the children in the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board out of school for another day where there's no local solution. I've satisfied myself that collective bargaining cannot work here; it has failed.

The member also pointed out about who voted for whom when. The third party has voted with the government on occasion; I know that. We have voted with the government on occasion. More often than not, we vote against. But there are times when as legislators we have to make a determination about what we believe is the right thing to do. It may offend some people who supported us, and I regret that. It may cause other people in turn to vote for us or against us.

That's not what's at issue here. What's at issue, from my perspective, are those children in Windsor and here in Toronto who have not had access to an education. I stress again, the members of the government and the official opposition don't agree on education; we will debate that in this House again—and we will no doubt debate it in the next election, and we will all be given the opportunity to put our case.

It troubles me that the third party would suggest that what they're doing now is consistent with what they did when they were in government. It's not.

**Ms Churley:** I want to congratulate the member for Trinity-Spadina for his comments. He was putting into perspective the realities of what we are debating here tonight. I want to make it clear once again, as when I spoke earlier, we're all taking about the kids who are out of school, but let's not forget that there are 13,000 people doing some of the most important jobs in our schools, taking care of our kids, making sure they're safe and keeping the classrooms clean.

They have kids and their kids are out too. These people are not making as much money as they deserve. They too have to buy food for their kids and put a roof over their kids' heads and make sure there is enough food

on the table in the city of Toronto, where rent controls have been removed in such a way that rents have skyrocketed and where there's no more affordable housing being built.

These people work hard and are out there. They contribute to our local economy in a way that helps us all in this society. You people tonight, both the Liberals and the Tories, are forgetting about these hard-working people who are out there for a reason. The teachers got a raise and all they are asking for is the same amount—that's the percentage, not even the same amount.

It's fairness we're talking about here and they deserve our support here tonight. I say to the Liberals, with all due respect, you were sitting here on Thursday and yes, we didn't hear it. It went by us and not one Liberal there stood up for those people sitting over there. Not one little "No" that could have come—

*Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** Yes, we were asleep at the switch here, that's right. But not one of you stood up for these people on Thursday, not one of you.

**Hon Mr Clark:** I'd like to remind the third party that when the Hamilton deal was discussed here back in December, we put them back in school. It was arbitrated and guess what? They got a good raise and they're thrilled with it. They're not complaining now. The kids are back at school and they got a good raise. They're not complaining now.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Trinity-Spadina has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Marchese:** The member for Scarborough Southwest talked about we're supporting the union because we depend on their money. We get 17% of our money, I admit—17% of our money comes from unions. The rest of our money comes from individual contributions.

Your money, I want to tell the good taxpayers of Ontario, comes from Bay Street—90% comes from Bay Street, the bankers, the corporates, the Stronach types.

**Hon Mr Newman:** No.

**Mr Marchese:** Oh no? Yes, I say to you and the taxpayers and the citizens watching. You people get your chunk of the money from the corporations when you have your fundraising events of \$700—and yes, they do too—\$700 a pop, \$600 a pop. It's the same Bay Street corporate types that come to you. Aren't you beholden to them? I'd rather be beholden to those unions and union members who give us 17% of support than to support the corporate sector that is in your pocket. Then you, member for Scarborough Southwest, say, "The bill must pass because we care about the kids."

I said to you and to the member for Stoney Creek, the deal that's been reached here in Toronto by the board and by union makes sure that kids are back on Monday. They agreed to that. They told you that, but your bill has no guarantees of them returning Monday. If anything, possibly Wednesday; we don't even know. I'm saying to you, if it is your stated intention to have the kids in those schools, the deal in Toronto puts them there faster. Not only that, it says to the board and the union, "We like the



fact that you came with an agreement and we're going to help to facilitate it," as opposed to saying, "No, we don't like it. We're going to be tough and we're going to hang there with our bill." That's wrong, member for Scarborough Southwest.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** Beaches-East York. Thank you, Speaker.

I have spent a fair bit of time tonight attempting to talk to members of the cabinet about how they could adapt their bill to allow the agreement for a binding arbitration process that has been arrived at between the Toronto school board and the union representing the employees of the Toronto school board, and it has been a difficult discussion.

You'll know that when I spoke earlier this evening I set out my concerns with respect to various aspects of the bill, but I did implore the government to consider an option which exempted the Toronto board and their employees from the provisions of this legislation and allowed their agreement for arbitration to proceed as opposed to the imposition of your process for arbitration.

I reflected on the words of the Minister of Labour who, as he began second reading debate in this House today, said very clearly that it was the government's wish to respect a local solution if a local solution could be found. A local solution wasn't found as of two days ago when you introduced your legislation, that's quite true and he, at that point in time, said even then, "We're sorry to have been dragged in this. We really would have rather that a local solution could be found."

This morning, the board—the employer—and the union—the employees—arrived at a detailed agreement about the process of referring this dispute to binding arbitration, with a mutually agreed to arbitrator, with a mutually agreed to process, with terms and conditions that would see employees returning to the schools tonight to begin the work of preparing those schools for normal operation as of 7 am on Monday, that the provisions of salary increases that have been talked about at the table, a first phase of them, would be implemented immediately, a number of things that the parties agreed to as fair. What was left and not resolved would be referred to a process that both parties have agreed to under duress, no doubt tremendous duress; the weapon, the hammer of this legislation.

2140

They tried in spite of the legislation—you might say in light of it, but either way they tried, given the circumstances—to come up with a local agreement to resolve this dispute, and they did that. The rest of the debate from that point on and the discussions back and forth centred on pleading with the government to respect that. The government had some very direct answers as to why they wouldn't. I listened carefully. I disagree with the government on that, but let me set out what the government said.

The Minister of Labour said very clearly, and some others have reiterated the same comments, "We don't trust that this agreement would be lived up to. We need the surety of the legislation. We need the enforcement mechanisms of the legislation." He said that he had heard and read in the media reports of threats of defying the legislation, and therefore that was grounds and proof that people couldn't be trusted to live up to the terms of this agreement. He indicated that the government needed the full force and effect of the provisions of this legislation to ensure that the schools were open on Monday, that that was their number one priority, and that if they could trust the parties, they could have gone that route, but the government needed surety.

I'm going to ask the government one more time if that in fact is the real reason. I want to propose one last alternative to you of how you can proceed with the surety that you want, with the enforcement mechanisms that you've identified are the key important elements of this, and yet respect a locally-agreed-to process for binding arbitration instead of imposing what both parties, the employer and the union, have viewed as a very draconian process, not in the best interests of the working relationship in the schools, and therefore not in the best interests of the children.

Section 12 of this legislation is the section that refers to pre-existing arbitration proceedings. It's been the stumbling block for us. The agreement between the Toronto District School Board and CUPE 4400 set out a process for arbitration and a choice of arbitrator. Section 12 says that the minute this act is passed and given royal assent tonight, comes into force, any arbitration that had been agreed to by the parties is of no effect. It cannot proceed; it can do no good. Your provisions will then kick in.

Section 13 of the act says essentially the same thing, but after the act comes into force, let's say later tonight, if the parties were to agree tomorrow to an arbitration process and arbitrator, that would have no effect. They are twin sections dealing simply with an arbitration decided today or tomorrow. Once you pass this act, they have no effect.

The very simple proposal that I want to put to the government is that when you seek royal assent for this act, you defer the proclamation of sections 12 and 13 until such time as proclaimed by the Lieutenant Governor. You can do that with a simple amendment to the royal assent section of the act which would simply add a sentence saying that sections 12 and 13 come into force on a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor. You can do that proclamation tomorrow or Sunday or Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday, or never if it is not needed.

All the other sections of the act, the sections that the Minister of Labour said were what the government needed for surety that the kids would be back in on Monday, for force and effect if someone disregarded the legislation—the penalties, the fines, the offences section—all of that would be there, so you would have no

worry that you had not given yourselves the power to bring this labour dispute to a close. What you would do, however, by delaying proclamation of those two sections of the act would be to give effect to the local agreement that's been arrived at for a binding arbitration process and the mutual selection of an arbitrator. You've all seen that agreement. You know that in some areas in terms of the return-to-work protocol, it's superior to your legislation in terms of the guarantees it offers you on timing. It is eminently reasonable. It meets every concern that has been put on the record by the government cabinet members who have spoken to this, who have spoken inside this House and who have spoken to the media to explain why the passage of the legislation, despite the agreement that's been arrived at, is necessary for the government.

I ask you if those words were the real reason that you had identified. If they were, then the proposal that we are putting forward, that I'm articulating now on behalf of my leader, Howard Hampton, and this caucus is a proposal that would allow the locally agreed-to arbitration process and selection of arbitrator to be respected. I reflect back once again on Minister Stockwell's own words as he started this debate today, and on many other occasions when he and the Premier and the Minister of Education and others have said they would prefer a local solution or a process that has been agreed to.

I put to you that then the Toronto board would be in no different circumstance than the board in Nipissing, in the Premier's hometown of North Bay, where you know there was also a work disruption and where you know that what brought a resolve to that was an agreement between the board and the union—another CUPE local—for a binding arbitration process that was mutually agreed to, with a mutual selection of arbitrator. The union in that case didn't like to be in that situation either, but they chose a locally negotiated process of resolution over one enforced by an outside third party, that party being the government of Ontario. The Premier of this province, with respect to that resolution in his hometown, gave praise to the parties. How could you justify treating Toronto any differently than the way in which you've responded to the same mechanisms of dispute resolution in the Nipissing area between the board as the employer and the CUPE local as the union representative there?

I say to the minister and I say to the colleagues, I know it's been a long night and I know that many people are angry about the procedural wranglings that have brought you back here. I believe the job we have done to create the time for the parties to try and find their own solution is a noble job and it was an important job. I believe we're still trying to find solutions as we're here in the House tonight, as we've been doing over the course of the last few hours. I say to you clearly, without going on at any greater length, that if the minister's reasons and rationale for rejecting the exclusion of the Toronto District School Board and their employees from the provisions of this act were that you needed the surety, the enforcement provisions, the hammer of the legis-

lation, and you did not have that assurance in the agreement they provided, I ask you now to look at the option of proceeding as you will with your entire bill except for the section that prohibits their arbitration to go forward. It is a simple solution.

It is still a terrible bill. It is still a bill that is offensive to the history and tradition of arbitration as a replacement for free-market collective bargaining. It is still a bill that is worse in its provisions than any other intrusion into collective bargaining, all of which have been referred to by members of this House tonight. In its constitution, in its wording and in its effect, it is still a bad bill. It is not a bill that I can support.

But there is an option here for you to do as you have said was your goal: respect local agreements and yet have the surety and the enforcement to open the schools on Monday. I ask you to consider that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

2150

**Hon Mr Klees:** I am pleased to respond to the member. I think we should make it very clear that the bill before us does not preclude a local agreement. In fact, that's what we're counting on. What we're saying is that, in addition to that, the people of these jurisdictions that are affected by this strike are counting on this Legislature to provide an underlined guarantee that in fact the local agreement will work and will be brought to a conclusion. That's what this is all about.

**Mr Sergio:** Just to add to the comments of the last speaker, let me say that we all would like to see ironclad agreements so we can get on with seeing the kids back in the schools. The problem is that we have been looking for that. The kids have been waiting, we have been waiting, the parents have been waiting, the workers have been waiting, the teachers have been waiting, everybody has been waiting. How long are we going to play along with this ironclad agreement that is not there?

In the calls I've gotten people have been saying, "Do not play with the future of our kids' education. We want to see them back in school."

Of course, it would be wonderful if every decision we make in this House wouldn't somehow tend to hurt someone in some way. We can't please everybody all the time. There are times, yes, when we have to support the government or go along in supporting and voting with the third party.

But we cannot be accused of being in bed with the government when we are doing the right thing. This is doing the right thing, voting to get the kids back in school. If doing the right thing means going to bed with the government, which we do when we feel it is right, then so be it. We believe it is the right thing to do.

I wish that we all had support with it; the rest of the House didn't support the Dalton McGuinty specific plan. We wouldn't be here tonight to discuss what we are discussing. But given the fact that we are, it's Friday night about 10 o'clock—we will have another two or three hours, maybe four, maybe till 8 o'clock tomorrow



morning—so be it if that is the case. There is nothing better, there is no other contract, so here we are.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I heard the government member for Oak Ridges try to give the general statement that the government's legislation will continue to allow the local process.

But I ask the member for Oak Ridges to read sections 12 and 13 of your own bill. Section 12 of the bill says: "If an arbitrator was appointed to settle matters in dispute between the parties relating to a bargaining unit before this act comes into force, on and after that day anything done by a person so appointed has no effect."

What we've got in Toronto is, the board of education and the union have agreed not only on an arbitrator but they've agreed on a process. Your act would immediately wipe that out. The process they have agreed to would actually have people back at work tomorrow and would have the schools cleaned so that the students could go back to work on Monday.

Your legislation will not do that. I say to some of the Liberal members that the same process, if you would agree, as the member for Beaches-East York has suggested, to an amendment, to an addition to sections 12 and 13 which says that they would not come into effect until they receive royal assent, it would mean that the local agreement that has been worked out could continue, the good work that has been done, the agreement that has been found, the common ground that has been found would not be wiped out by a bill. Most important, because I've heard you say this all night, the children would be back in the school, a clean school, on Monday. The best that your process can do is Wednesday, and the Minister of Labour confirmed that with the media earlier tonight. So you lose nothing from your bill; you get all of the assurances, but you get a better deal for the workers and the board, and you get the children back in the school. I urge the Liberals to support this as well.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I sure am glad that I never employed the leader of the third party as my solicitor when I was in business because he would have bankrupted me in short order. His interpretation of law and the rhetoric that they employ tonight is nothing more or less than an ill-fated filibuster on this piece of legislation in order to keep the kids away from school.

I simply cannot sympathize with the third party at all. I am very glad that the opposition party supports us on this and I am very happy to support this piece of legislation in order that we can get the children back in school on Monday.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Beaches-East York has two minutes to respond.

**Ms Lankin:** Thank you, Speaker. May I say first of the member from Oak Ridges that the point he made is that parties are free to continue to negotiate to arrive at a collective agreement. The point that he did not respond to, and I think he knows this but let me put it on the record, is that sections 12 and 13 of the act preclude an arbitration process to resolve the outstanding matters in dispute other than the process that you are imposing

through your legislation. All that we are asking you to do is to consider having all the force and effect of every other provision of your act but to allow the arbitration to continue.

**Hon Mr Klees:** It doesn't affect it at all.

**Ms Lankin:** To the member opposite, perhaps we can sit down and take a look at the bill, because having checked and gone through this in terms of the drafting of an amendment with legal counsel, I'm quite sure of what I'm putting forward to you: the option does present itself with an amendment to the bill that says those sections would come into force upon proclamation and you could delay proclamation by a day, by two days, by three days, by a week, or you could choose to never proclaim it. It's very easy, it doesn't affect any of the other provisions of your bill in terms of the time frames of back to work, in terms of the penalties if there is a disregard for the legislation. It actually is a workable solution, and I know that your instinctual response—I've seen it—is to say no.

I ask you in the time we have remaining tonight—we still have a couple of hours to go in terms of the discussion here—to please look at what I put forward as a reasoned suggestion to allow a locally agreed-to process, yes, under duress, but nevertheless arrived at by the employer and the union, and it's one that they've sought your approval for. Please give that to them.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Churley:** I'm not sure everybody in this House, perhaps particularly the newest member in the House on the Tory side and others, are aware of my colleague the member for Beaches-East York's background in arbitration. She's a brilliant strategist and worked very hard tonight, going beyond any kind of partisanship in her work in this regard. I've seen her, as we all have, on many occasions, because she knows how to do this, try to reach some kind of a compromise when we all can't agree.

This is one of these situations—we're in here tonight at 10 o'clock—where we are quite frankly terrified on this side in the NDP of the implications of this bill being passed tonight. We are terrified because we all know from past experience that when workers are forced back to work—and particularly under conditions in this bill, in this situation where they have an agreement on a process and they're ready to knuckle down and come to an agreement—it's just going to cause more chaos and problems in the schools. So what my colleague from Beaches-East York has been doing tonight—setting aside, yes, some of the partisan speeches that have been made—is trying to find a solution that everybody in this Legislature could live with.

Now, I look at the Liberals tonight—

**Hon Mr Klees:** Why don't you do that: set it aside?

2200

**Ms Churley:** I'm serious, though. You see, it's really hard in this House, and no wonder the people who are here tonight who are looking to all of us to find the best solution for everybody tonight—

**Hon Mr Klees:** Why don't we vote and get out of here?

**Ms Churley:** You see? That is what we're up against here.

I'm trying to say to you, government whip, if you will listen for a moment, that we don't want to have the vote and get out of here, because guess what? We'll be right back at this in some time from now because there will be another strike and more who knows what kind of chaos. I'm trying to say to everybody, including the Liberals here, I wonder if it is possible—am I insane here? Is it possible people will listen for one moment? No, they're laughing. I guess not. I guess I'm going to be disappointed. I actually thought, after listening to the member for Beaches-East York put forward a proposal, that there might be some interest in it, that we might be able to all come out of here tonight with a solution that works for everybody, including the children.

Once again, let me come back to one of the main reasons why the member for Beaches-East York and our caucus put this forward tonight. It will allow this agreement for a process that both the parties have put in place and have signed to go ahead, to proceed with that.

**Hon Mr Klees:** It can still go ahead.

**Ms Churley:** They cannot go ahead. If they could still go ahead, we wouldn't be proposing this tonight. Believe me, Frank, they can't go ahead. Read the section of the bill. The minister will tell you. It is very clear. Get your bills out and read the section.

All we're asking you to do—we're not asking you to throw it out. The way it's been put to you is to put off giving effect to those two sections, sections 12 and 13, upon proclamation, which you can do any time if you're not satisfied within a few days, if the process isn't working to your liking. It's not a lot to ask, and I'm not sure why the Liberals are studiously reading their newspapers and not paying attention to this proposal.

**Mr Sergio:** I'm listening to you, Marilyn. Come off it.

**Ms Churley:** Well, there's one listening, but we asked your House leader, the Liberal House leader, if he would be willing to discuss with us this proposal, that it may even work for Windsor, and he said no. He said no. There's been partisan stuff going on here all night, as there usually is.

**Hon Mr Klees:** Oh, not on your part, Marilyn.

**Ms Churley:** Hey, all of us accusing each other of all kinds of things all night, but here it is five after 10 at night and we have some workers sitting here, and I'm sure we have people at home watching this on TV, and they're looking to us, their elected members, to come together in some way tonight—not anybody worrying about who might claim credit for some kind of brokered solution.

**Hon Mr Klees:** Call the question, then.

**Ms Churley:** You see? I'm sorry to tell you folks out there, and particularly those 13,000 workers who have been on the streets for all this time, who are agonizing over what they're doing, who are trying to feed their kids through all of this, that I'm standing here tonight and all

they want to do is get out of here so they can go home to their warm beds and their nice houses and their kids. That's what they want to do tonight, when we have an opportunity—

*Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** We are not filibustering here tonight. Let me say this very clearly. We are here tonight to give—

**Mr O'Toole:** I don't have an apartment in Toronto.

**Ms Churley:** We're not talking about your dumb apartment. I don't care about your apartment. We're talking about these workers here. We're talking about trying to find a solution here tonight.

*Interjections.*

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, we're all tired, but I have to tell you that I am profoundly disappointed in the response and I hope the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour, unlike you who are sitting here—you've been given your lines tonight and you haven't been given any permission yet to go off them, but I hope very much that those ministers are looking at the possibility of making this one little amendment. It could make a difference.

I get so sad watching these people, Mr Speaker. I mean, they really are a sad looking lot. A solution is presented to them, and look at them. They're making silly gestures, they're laughing, they mock. They mock gestures. They think it's all a game.

I want to remind members in this House again tonight that this is not a game. Let me remind you again that we're talking about 13,000 people who are on strike for very good reason, and they have children too and they want to find a solution. Look at them, please. Look: they're real people. They've got kids. They want to get back to work. They want to go in and get those schools cleaned, and the special-ed teachers want to get back in there. Look at them.

Our proposal that we put forward—

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** Your proposal would spend two more weeks.

**Ms Churley:** What did he say?

*Interjections.*

**Ms Churley:** Where is the member from? The member for—

**Mr Gill:** You don't even know that.

**Ms Churley:** No, I don't.

**Mr Bisson:** Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

**Ms Churley:** Things are deteriorating here rather rapidly, I'm afraid. I know you've had a break and some of you may have had a few drinks; I don't know. People are tired and getting a little bit grumpy, but we're willing to stay here as long as it takes tonight, Mr Speaker, to give all three parties an opportunity to get together and take a look at this amendment.

I do want to say to you tonight, Mr Speaker, that we've been working hard—you just came in the chair recently—to find a solution to this dreadful situation we find ourselves in tonight, and to find a solution—

**Interjection:** Call the question.



**Ms Churley:** They want me to call the question and just have the vote and get it over with, but we've been working to find a solution so that these people can walk out of here tonight knowing that the agreement that both the parties have made for a process that could work—

*Interjections.*

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Frank, go up in the gallery and talk to them. Come on. I dare you.

**Mr Kormos:** Come on. They want you up there. They want you. Come on.

*Interjections.*

**Ms Churley:** I think they do want to talk to you. I think they would really like an opportunity to talk directly. They're getting frustrated. They're watching you, they're watching the way you're reacting to our proposal here, and they're frustrated.

Mr Speaker, I believe that if the member of the government sat down and talked to some of the workers who are here tonight, they might have a better idea of what they are going through and the implications of this bill on them tonight. I'm dead serious about this.

**Hon Mr Klees:** We believe you.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** I take it now that the Minister of Education is not interested either, which is very disappointing.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I didn't say that.

**Ms Churley:** That's good. I believe perhaps the Minister of Education's comments were direct and favourable to what I'm saying. I hope very much that the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour are taking a look at this proposal tonight.

I want to remind people again of why we're proposing this. If the minister has found that there is something wrong with this solution, she should stand up and tell us, but here's what I would like to suggest be done now: that the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour, the Liberal House leader and any of the other Liberals here tonight who are interested, and Ms Lankin and our leader and a few members of our caucus, get together and go over the proposal that has been put forward tonight by Ms Lankin on behalf of our caucus. Let's take a look at it and see if it can work.

2210

I want to remind members again in all seriousness why we are proposing this, if they would listen. These people who are sitting here tonight are really tired, as we all are, but they're particularly tired. They've been at this for some time now. Some of them have been up night after night trying to find a solution to this problem in all sincerity. You know, and we all know in this House, that they're negotiating under very difficult circumstances. The funding formula and the \$1.5 billion cut out of the Ministry of Education, cut out of the board, have made it more and more difficult for the board to negotiate with the workers. But the teachers just got a raise, and all these lower-paid workers are asking for is the same kind of raise and a few other things on the bargaining table.

They've reached a situation where I believe they're getting close to finding a solution. I'm talking specifically about Toronto here. My riding is in Toronto. My constituents are affected by this. I am hearing from parents, I am hearing from kids, I am hearing from the strikers, and the agony out there is felt on all sides. Everybody wants to get to a solution that works for everybody.

That's where we're trying to go tonight. This is not a filibuster. This is giving us all an opportunity, which is what we have been working on in our caucus, to try to find a solution. We're not happy with the bill, as the member for Beaches-East York said. We still do not like the bill, don't like the way you're going about this, don't like the clauses in the bill, and should you accept these amendments and end up going back to proclaim those sections 12 and 13, we'd be very unhappy. That's a fact. But let me reiterate: you would be losing nothing. That is why it's so frustrating to stand here again, after the member for Beaches-East York talked about this, and to have your heads shake and absolutely no interest being shown from either the Tories or the Liberals to date that we can sit down and find a solution to this, at least a partial solution, at least an opportunity for these people to go away tonight feeling that there is a chance, just a chance, that we might all come out of this so that the workers can go back to the classroom and not be forced back to the classroom. What a difference that makes in people's morale.

Here we come back to the children again, because if we can find a solution, a way out of this mess tonight, even a tiny way out of this mess, when those workers go back tomorrow to start cleaning those schools because they want to go back, because they want to make this work, they are going to be happier on Monday, the kids are going to be happier on Monday, the teachers are going to be happier on Monday, and the parents are going to be happier on Monday, and on Tuesday and the following weeks and the following months, because the workers won't have been forced to follow draconian legislation where they have no say, no choice, and they're being forced to go back to work. We all know from past experience that that never works. It creates more problems and more chaos, and what is frustrating about this tonight is that that's where you're hell-bent on going, no matter what other solutions are offered.

Even as Tories, with your particular philosophy in politics, we all know that forcing people back to work never works. At the end of the day the workers are bitter and upset, for good reason, and there is more chaos and there are more problems in our schools. If you want to talk about the parents and the children, they are fed up with this chaos in the schools, and so are these workers. Everybody wants to get back in the schools and the classrooms and do what they normally do: teach and take care of the kids and clean the schools and all the other stuff they do. They don't want more chaos.

In conclusion, in all sincerity, the NDP is inviting the members of the Tory government and the members of the

Liberal Party to sit down with us right now and hammer this out. If the member for Beaches-East York is correct, and I have reason to believe she is—she has looked into it—then we have a partial solution here tonight. Nobody has to walk out of here, government members don't have to walk out of here tonight, having the legislation passed as it was first worded. It's no shame working with the opposition and finding a better solution. That's why we're here sometimes—you would think all the time—and particularly in a situation like this. As members from all three parties, we have such an opportunity right here and now to sit down and negotiate, to talk about and come up with an agreement that people can live with. The workers can go away and clean the schools over the weekend and get the kids back in there on Monday.

At the same time, that's the beauty of this suggestion. The government doesn't lose a thing. They can still proclaim the act for those sections if they're not happy with where things are going. We don't like that, but that's part of what you do when you negotiate, when your back is against the wall, as we are here. You try to find a solution that's a little better than the one that's on the table. I would again, in all sincerity, ask people to drop their partisan rhetoric now and come to the table and see if we can reach an agreement tonight, so we can all go home with our heads high.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Questions or comments?

**Mr O'Toole:** I've listened with some interest, but I think it comes down to democracy. There are 95 people in this House who want to see the children back in school, as well as a process for resolving the workers' rights. That's democracy. It appears the New Democrats are anti-democratic. There are eight of them, and it confounds me why they want to keep the students out of school and be used as a ploy.

I think their leader, Mr Hampton, should read past section 13. It appears that their pages 7, 8 and 9 are missing from the copy of the bill. If you read section 15, it talks about the mediator under 15(3): "The mediator-arbitrator may try to assist the parties to settle any matter that he or she considers necessary to conclude a new collective agreement." It further goes on to say that they will work with the parties and that the parties are free to make submissions. It also goes on to say that if they have an agreement, they should give notice to the arbitrator and the agreement would be accepted.

What is missing from this, though, is holding the big stick, the big hammer of the NDP over the students' and parents' heads. I don't think you really understand it. I understand that Sid Ryan is the head of your party and I understand that Earl Manners is the head of your party. You have no thoughts yourselves. I think Bob White has said it. I think he's got it right. You've got it wrong. I think you should give Sid a call to see if you should call the vote. The people on this side respectfully want the students to have the right to be educated. That's what education is for. As far as I'm concerned, ask those

people. To sit here listening to your rhetoric tonight, 95 people say yes and eight say no, and I say you're wrong.

**Mr Caplan:** I'll be very brief. I remember the social contract.

**Mr Bisson:** That was really helpful, I'll tell you. Listen, let's try this one more time in two minutes. The issue is quite a simple issue. The parties have not been able, in the case of either Toronto or Windsor, to come to an agreement at the table.

Let's deal specifically with Toronto. The parties were at the table. They were not able to come to an agreement. So they have agreed on a process that says there will be an arbitrator named. That arbitrator will then look at both sides and come up with a solution based on the facts as presented to him or her as the arbitrator. That's what they've decided to do.

2220

What your legislation says is that neither now nor after the legislation is proclaimed can an arbitrator make any decision, because it's not going to be binding. Your legislation precludes the arbitrator coming to a decision. Mr O'Toole gets up and says, "Look at the next section, because it talks about mediators." The problem we've got here is that the government doesn't understand the process of bargaining. A mediator is not an arbitrator. They're two different people. The mediator is there to try to bring the parties together; the arbitrator plays a different role. The sections we're talking about, sections 12 and 13, preclude the arbitrator from doing the job.

What we have now is that the parties have come to an agreement. Here it is; it's signed. It says, "If the government allows us not to have the legislation applied to the Toronto situation, we will get the people to go back to work Saturday morning. We will clean the schools Saturday and Sunday. On Monday the children will be back at school." That's what CUPE wants, that's what the Toronto board wants, and you guys want to keep them out. Either you guys don't get it or you have an agenda that's way beyond everybody in this room. We say, get it together and figure out what the process of negotiations is. Once you've got that figured out, maybe we'll be close to getting a solution.

**Hon Mr Klees:** Either the NDP doesn't understand the legislation or they don't want to understand the legislation. We have said very clearly that that process, the local bargaining process, can continue. We welcome it. All we are saying is that it's not enough to have a commitment. We want a guarantee by this Legislature that the kids will be back in school on Monday. That can happen tonight. Let's have the vote. Let's get it passed. Let's get on with the negotiations. Let's get on with making this happen tonight.

**The Speaker:** Response?

**Ms Churley:** The response from the Liberal member was just so ridiculous that it doesn't even count. You can't make any comment on it, because what's that got to do with anything? We're talking about the people who are here tonight who are looking to all of us for help tonight.



It's very clear from all the response from the Tory members that they still don't understand what we're saying over here, which means that my colleagues will have ample opportunity to explain again what we're trying to describe to you: how this process would work and the implications of the proposal put forward tonight. Let me tell you again what it means. You hold off—what were the sections again?—sections 12 and 13 until proclamation. You still have the opportunity to do that at any time; it's not gone.

I see that what I'm saying here is not having any impact or effect whatsoever. I will admit at this time that I have failed to persuade my colleagues, and I will leave it now to some of my other colleagues to try to persuade people that this is the right thing, in fact the only thing, to do tonight.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Martel:** I am pleased to participate in this debate again because I think we have reached a point where the rubber's going to hit the road or it's not, or the minister's going to be shown to be, frankly, dishonest—no, I don't want to use that word, OK, not meaning—I take that back, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I'd cut it off in the first place. You're going to have to withdraw that. You can't say those things in here.

**Ms Martel:** I withdraw that

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Ms Martel:** It's going to become clear that the minister didn't really mean what he said at 1:30 this afternoon when he came to the Legislature and in his second reading remarks said the government would have preferred not to have intervened. Those of us who were sitting here, and many of us were, heard him clearly say that. In fact, when I spoke on second reading and he was sitting in his place, I asked him if that was true and he nodded his head. Any of us here saw that happen a second time.

The minister also said that it would have been his preference and the government's preference to have a local solution, and any of us who sat here at 1:30 heard him say that. But you know what? Just to be sure, when I spoke on second reading and the minister was sitting in his place, I asked him if that was true and he nodded his head again, and we saw that. So we have a situation where the Minister of Labour has come into this House and confirmed on more than one occasion for me, and has confirmed to other members of the House, that the government didn't really want to be in this position, but because there wasn't a local solution they feel they have to intervene. Fair enough. That's where we're starting from.

During the course of the debate this afternoon, lo and behold, we discover that in fact a local solution is on the table, because we discover that a representative from the Toronto District School Board and a representative from the union came to Queen's Park this afternoon to deliver a package to the minister. That package was a signed

agreement between the union and the Toronto District School Board to move to an arbitration process.

I want to explain what that means because the member from Oak Ridges has tried on a couple of occasions to say that the parties can just continue to work toward a collective agreement. Maybe what he doesn't understand—or maybe he doesn't want to understand, and I think the second is more likely—is that unfortunately the parties haven't got to a collective agreement and probably won't get to a collective agreement.

That is why, under duress, both the Toronto District School Board and the union have agreed on a process for arbitration, because they have come to the conclusion, regrettably for both parties, that they probably cannot bargain a collective agreement. Putting that in the legislation, allowing them the possibility to continue to do so, doesn't change the fact that the parties are beyond that now.

It is not going to happen. The parties have recognized it's not going to happen. The union in particular, which did not want to go to arbitration, has decided to do so and that is the basis of the agreement that was delivered to the minister today. The parties have moved beyond a collective agreement and bargaining that, because they know it's probably not going to happen and they have agreed to an arbitration process.

So it makes no sense for the member for Oak Ridges or any other government member to point to the legislation and say, "Oh, but they can still collectively bargain for the next seven days," because it's not going to happen and the parties have recognized that—regrettably, but they have and they've moved on. They've moved on to an arbitration process that they both have agreed to.

2230

Now, realistically, we have to deal with an arbitration process. That's what we're dealing with tonight. The parties know that's what they're dealing with, and I think the government members understand that too. So we've got an arbitration process that has been agreed to by both parties. It sets out an arbitrator whom they've agreed to, it sets out some increases that will occur as soon as the strike is over and it sets out the protocol to return to work. As I said, both parties have agreed to that and they've signed it.

We've put this very clearly to the minister: "Here is the arbitrated process that the parties have agreed to. Since you want a local solution—that's what you're interested in—accept that process." The minister came back with the following response: he alleged that someone from the union—he didn't name any names—has said publicly that they were going to defy the legislation.

I think that at this point it's probably worth reading into the record a statement that was issued by CUPE president, John Weatherup, this afternoon at about 5:45. It says, "It has come to the attention of CUPE 4400 that the Minister of Labour has suggested that CUPE 4400 would defy legislation being debated in the Legislature or that the union would not honour the binding arbitration process ordered by Mr Mitchnick to resolve the out-

standing issues in the Toronto District School Board and CUPE 4400 labour dispute. I am issuing this statement to clarify for all concerned that I have never indicated in any comment, public or private, that I would defy any legislation or order. Earlier today I called on the minister to reverse the legislation because CUPE 4400 and the Toronto District School Board have agreed to abide by an order issued earlier today by Mr Mitchnick. This local solution would allow us to enter into a joint process and return to work. Finally, at the bottom, the word 'binding' is unequivocal. I can confirm to the minister and to other members of the House that I honour my agreements. CUPE 4400 honours its agreements." It's signed by the president.

I think that should be enough for the minister. Clearly the president of this union, where 13,000 people are on strike, has never said they would defy the legislation. But that seems not to be good enough for the minister, because the minister came back to say the arbitration process, as agreed to, was still not acceptable because there was no way to guarantee the agreement and its provisions could be enforced; there are no penalties in the agreement. So if one side or the other doesn't want to commit to the process, there's nothing to force them to do that, monetary or otherwise. So at that point his problem seemed to be that there was no way to enforce the agreement with respect to arbitration that the two parties had agreed to.

My colleague from Beaches-Woodbine came forward and gave the minister a way out. The way out is this: the provisions of the bill that the minister seems most concerned about, which would allow for enforcement and contain penalty clauses, could remain in effect in this bill. But what could be set aside, not proclaimed as part of the full bill, would be those two sections which would continue to allow the arbitration process that has been outlined to the minister and agreed to by the parties to continue.

It's imperative that an amendment come forward to deal with those two sections, because otherwise the process that has been agreed to will be null and void if and when the bill is passed. Let me repeat: under section 12 it says, "If an arbitrator was appointed to settle matters in dispute between the parties relating to a bargaining unit before this act comes into force, on and after that day anything done by a person so appointed has no effect." We know that section directly relates to the agreement that has been worked out between the two parties for arbitration, because it contains the name of an arbitrator who has been mutually agreed to by the parties right now and would go into effect immediately if this agreement could go into effect.

The second section we need to be concerned with is section 13, and it says, "While this act is in force, the parties shall not appoint an arbitrator, mediator or mediator-arbitrator to settle matters in dispute between them relating to a bargaining unit otherwise than under this act, and anything done by a person so appointed has no effect." Again, that section is relevant because we have

an agreement where a mediator has been agreed to by the parties. If we go ahead with this bill with these sections intact, the agreement the Toronto District School Board and CUPE have come to will be null and void, and so will become null and void the mediator whom they would like to mediate this, and so will become null and void the whole return-to-work process they have agreed to.

The government continues to argue, "That's OK. It doesn't matter if that happens, because the parties can still go back and collectively bargain for seven days." They want to miss the point that we have arrived at an agreement for arbitration because the parties regrettably couldn't come to an agreement through collective bargaining. They are beyond that. They have had to move beyond that—under duress, but they have. So talking about collective bargaining and the fact that the bill still allows for that opportunity is dumb, because in reality it doesn't apply to this case because the parties have moved beyond that.

So we have, as far as I am concerned, a compromise that would do what the minister wants done. That would be to keep in effect any of the provisions he alleges are necessary to make sure the terms and conditions of the agreement aren't broken. I don't believe they will be. I believe they've been arrived at voluntarily, that a voluntary agreement between the parties is much more likely to succeed than a solution that is imposed by a third party, which is the government process. But the minister wants to insist that is possible. He can no longer do that, because those sections of the bill that deal with enforcement and penalty will continue to apply.

But for the purposes of the employees here tonight and for the purposes of the Toronto District School Board, those sections regarding the arbitration process they have arrived at will not be affected negatively. Because if we agree not to proclaim them, then the agreement will remain intact, and then the folks can go and do what the minister said he wanted them to do, which was to work for the local solution and get the other issues dealt with by the arbitrator.

What's important is what that buys us. If the government agrees to do those two things, to leave in abeyance those two sections so the process that has been agreed to can continue, a couple of things happen. We move forward with an arbitrator whom the two parties have already agreed on, not one imposed by the minister, not with an arbitrator who can scarcely be called neutral, not because he's an unreasonable man or reasonable—I don't know him—but he can scarcely be called neutral, because he has most recently completed doing labour relations work for one of the parties involved in the dispute. Neither the union nor the public should accept having any confidence in a person who has had a recent relationship in a working sense with one of the parties. It would allow the board and the employees to move forward with an arbitrator they do have confidence in and whose decisions they are more likely to accept than the



decision of someone who cannot be deemed neutral from any reasonable person's standpoint.

2240

Secondly, and probably most importantly, section 17 says, "The strike shall be terminated as of noon on the date of this order"—that would be today—"and employees shall return to work no later than April 30, 2001"—Monday—"in accordance with their regular schedule. Employees required to return to work earlier in order to ensure the resumption of normal operations by 7 am ... shall endeavour to do so beginning on the date of this order and shall be paid at the applicable rate."

So there is a guarantee that the staff would be in the schools beginning tomorrow, working through Saturday and Sunday so that staff and students would be ready to come into the school buildings by 7 am on Monday. Do you know what's important about that? I've heard the members say we've got to get the kids back to school. They should have seen the minister tonight when he was scammed by the media. The minister had to admit that under the legislation there is the distinct possibility that the children cannot be back in the schools until Wednesday—Wednesday.

So if the government members are really interested in the children being back to school on Monday, as they said they were, then they'd better take another serious look at our proposal, because it's our proposal that's going to get the kids back in the schools. The minister was very clear in speaking to the media that there is a distinct possibility, because of the timing in the bill, that the students could not be back in their places in school till Wednesday.

I ask government members to think about this. We've got a proposal that's going to get the kids back on a date you say you want them there. It seems to me that if that's what you really want to do, then the minister's got to put his money where his mouth is and put in place the agreement that's going to get us there, and that is to waive both sections 12 and 13 from final proclamation. Set those aside. Allow the agreement that's been agreed to to go into effect, and people will be back in school on Monday.

We've gone at this any number of ways. We have worked very hard to try to buy the parties some time to come to a solution, and the parties have done that. The minister himself said in his place this afternoon that that's what he wanted them to do. Then they came here with the details of that to present to the minister to try to encourage him to accept it, so that what he wanted could be met and they would be allowed to continue, through an arbitration process, to have the issues resolved. Let's recognize that while the bill might talk about collective bargaining, it's not going to happen in this case. The parties have understood that, even though they might not like it, and that's why we're dealing with an arbitration process.

One final point. These are hard-working families. Thirteen thousand people are out. Thirteen thousand employees have a lot of kids, and they'd like their kids

back in school too. But do you know what? They have an obligation to feed and clothe their kids and pay the rent and pay the natural gas and the utilities, and \$25,000 a year is not a whole heck of a lot of money to do those things for their kids. So when you people talk about kids here tonight—and I say this to the government members—you'd better start thinking about their kids too, because they're raising them on \$25,000, which is on a lot less than any of us here are doing.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Bradley:** If the government is looking for money, and they always are, to allocate to various areas of endeavour such as education, so that boards of education are able to meet their obligations to their employees to ensure that employees are treated fairly, the government of Ontario should provide additional funds by taking the money it spends on self-serving government advertising, on which they have now spent \$235 million, and allocate it to the field of education, so that the salary grid for those who are involved in various endeavours in education can be increased.

I received, and you probably received this at your home—in fact I remember, Mr Speaker, that you and I were on a television program on Global Television. If I do not mischaracterize your approach on that occasion, it was that you were less than enthusiastic—I will put it that way—about governments spending money on self-serving advertising. I don't know how many of the government members have received this yet. I'm not going to hold it up and use it as a prop, but the Premier's photograph is in it and other government propaganda. Now this does not have the logo of the Progressive Conservative Party on it; that would be quite legitimate. I may not like it coming out, but that would be quite legitimate. Instead we have taxpayers' dollars being used once again for self-serving advertising. They've called it On, by the way, in case you were wondering what it's called.

As I say, there are \$235 million that you have spent on what I would characterize as self-serving advertising of a partisan nature. You could take that funding and allocate it to the field of education, and therefore boards of education would be in a better position to treat their employees with fairness when it comes to contracts. I urge you to end this kind of self-serving advertising and invest that money in education.

**Mr Bisson:** I would like to comment on the member for Nickel Belt's comments in regard to where we're at. We have to try to make the point one more time, because the government just doesn't seem to get it.

It's really simple: the parties, at least in the case of Toronto—we're going to hear a little bit later about Windsor; my friend from Welland-Thorold is going to bring us up-to-date on the Windsor situation—were not able to negotiate a settlement, and as a result of that, the government says, "We want to pass back-to-work legislation to force them back into the workplace." We said, "Give the parties an opportunity to negotiate a settlement. If you do so, more than likely they will be able to get an

agreement." They did. This afternoon they inked an agreement between the union and the employer, the Toronto school board and CUPE Local 4400, where they said, "We agree to a process by which we will mutually agree on an arbitrator. That arbitrator will then deal with the issues presented by both parties and we will live with the decision of the arbitrator." The problem we have is that in the legislation the government puts forward, it precludes this agreement from carrying forward.

We're now in the strange situation that the proposal put forward by the union and the employer would see the workers back to work on Saturday to clean up the schools and have the kids back in school by Monday. This is the agreement that the board and the union have come to. The problem we now have, because the government has decided to save face or flex its muscles or God knows what, is that we're in a position where we're probably not going to have the kids back in school till Tuesday, maybe Wednesday.

We're pleading with the government that if you're really serious about trying to get the kids back in school, agree to our amendment that would allow this process to go forward and get the kids to come back, because otherwise your process is not going to see them back till Tuesday, maybe Wednesday.

2250

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** The question has been asked as to where we're at, and of course this labour dispute has been in existence since the end of March. We have 300,000 public school students who are not going to school. Parents are concerned as to where their children are going to be cared for, the young ones in particular. There isn't enough space for all that. There is no place to put those children.

We have 300,000 elementary students and 100,000 secondary students who are losing more time. It's very simple to me. I understand there is a labour dispute and there's a concern over a number of issues, but the fact of the matter is that we have all of these students, all of these children, who are being affected, and I haven't heard one comment from the people on that side, this group of New Democrats, commenting on those children. Why don't you stand up and start talking about getting those students back to school?

**Mr Sergio:** Let me make a couple of comments. First of all, I want to congratulate both the member for Danforth, I believe—

**Ms Churley:** Toronto-Danforth.

**Mr Sergio:**—Toronto-Danforth; a wonderful area, by the way—and the member for Nickel Belt on her presentation as well.

Two things they have said make a lot of sense. One is to say to the government side, "Look at the opposition here. From time to time we do come up with good solutions. Listen to us. We want to make a deal." As late as yesterday, Dalton McGuinty said, "Let's go to arbitration," which is what the member for Nickel Belt said. "Let's move on to the arbitration process." We did say that, but Dalton McGuinty, with his good proposal,

couldn't get enough support to move on to binding arbitration a long time ago. We could have been home tonight. It's almost midnight and we are debating the situation here. If they had listened to Dalton McGuinty, including the government side, we wouldn't be here tonight. We would have moved on to binding arbitration, and I mean solid, ironclad arbitration which would have got the people on both sides to make a deal.

Let me read one particular thing as to why it's important to move on with this particular issue. This comes from East York Collegiate, and this is what one student says. "I am agitated and uncomfortable with the situation. I have to look after a younger brother at home, so I'm finding it difficult to keep up with the assigned work. I'm feeling stressed out and beginning to panic now that the strike has stretched into its fourth week."

It's four weeks, not one week. I think it's about time we get the kids back to school and to class.

**Ms Martel:** In response to the member from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, here is the irony. We've been talking about kids. They said they want the kids back in class on Monday, but they've got a bill, and the Minister of Labour confirmed it outside to the media, where he can't guarantee that kids will be back in class until Wednesday. That's what your minister said to the media outside this evening, David—not until Wednesday. That was probably right.

We have a solution here that came forward from these good folks in the gallery and their employer, and I'm sure they didn't come to it easily. But we've got a solution on the table and we'll have the children back in the school on Monday, and you don't want to agree with this. So don't give me any nonsense about how you care about kids. Don't tell me how you care about kids, because your minister confirmed outside, not more than about four hours ago, that there was every likelihood that the children could not be back in until Wednesday under your bill. So you wear it when they're not back in until Wednesday. We've come here tonight with a proposal put forward by the workers themselves that will have the kids back in by Monday. If they're not, you'll wear it and it will look good on you.

You don't want to move forward and have a local solution. I don't think your Minister of Labour has any desire to have a local solution whatsoever. I don't think he meant what he said when he sat in his chair and nodded to me or said it in his speech. I don't think he had any intention whatsoever of having a local solution come forward. What this government wants is a bill that's completely draconian, with an arbitration process that's completely unacceptable. They want to put it in place so that in the next school dispute and the next one after that, they can ram it down the throats of teachers and union workers again and again. That's what this government wants.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Kormos:** This is getting curiouser and curiouser. What we find out is that notwithstanding—

*Interjections.*



**Mr Kormos:** Look, you just heard Ms Martel speak very directly about the response that hard-working women and men, in this instance members of Toronto's CUPE Local 4400—please understand, these folks, as you've heard from New Democrats—because let's understand, the Liberals didn't want to have a debate about this bill. They didn't want to have any debate at all, zip, nada, zero. One thing we know about Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals is that they wanted this bill to pass in one afternoon with no debate, second and third reading. I don't call that very democratic. I don't know how Mr McGuinty and his Liberal caucus justify that to their constituents and their membership as in any way, shape or form being democratic.

We understand that the Conservatives aren't the party of democracy. Now we learn that they have intimate partners in this exercise, that there's been a marriage and that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are prepared to travel not only the same road, but at the same pace and in the same direction as Harris and the Tories.

The NDP caucus put to this government, to its education minister, its labour minister and its whip, a proposition that was put forth by members of CUPE Local 4400. You've heard it explained several times now. It was a proposition that would have recognized the hard work these women and men have done through their negotiating committee to set up a process whereby they and the employer, the Toronto District School Board, will select an arbitrator and the arbitrator will arbitrate the differences between the two. They had resolved a whole pile of them. They were left with a few. You had already done the bulk of the work, hadn't you? There was a deal and there is a deal, and that is to select an arbitrator to resolve the outstanding issues. But that's the problem. The Tory backbenchers haven't read the legislation. They don't give a tinker's dam about the legislation and like Liberal hacks are here simply to follow their marching orders from their whips and their leaders and will swallow this thing regardless of how distasteful and repugnant it is.

You people aren't very impressive when it comes to any standard of parliamentary process, let me tell you that. You don't understand arbitration; you don't understand your legislation; you don't understand labour negotiations. You've made that so apparent. Your labour minister has confirmed all that because he has flatly rejected the proposition put forward by New Democrats this evening, the proposition that was devised and developed by members of CUPE Local 4400, a proposition that was a legitimate one, that was a cautious one, that was a responsible one, a proposition that gave effect to the hard work that had already been done in the long-term bargaining process.

Minister Stockwell, the Minister of Labour, has slammed the door on these workers. He's so anxious to get his lopsided arbitration process in effect, his unique, remarkable, unprecedented and very unjust—I'll tell you this: you guys haven't had a good track record in court, have you? I think this government has lost every single

bit of litigation it has embarked on, hasn't it? The only one you didn't lose was the lawsuit by Clement against McGuinty, to be fair. Every other lawsuit—you guys have spent a fortune on legal fees for losers. You sent Flaherty, the Attorney General, to Ottawa, where he embarrassed himself. There were articles in the *Law Times* and all the lawyerly newspapers saying, "Who is this clown from Queen's Park?" I would have sent Mr DeFaria, as a lawyer, or Mr Tilson, another lawyer. They could have swept the floor up with Jim Flaherty at the Supreme Court of Canada. He made a fool of himself.

**2300**

So you guys don't have a very good track record, but I'll tell you this: you're going to be inviting litigation with this act. You're going to be spending a fortune, because this act offends the fundamental concept of natural justice—have I got that right, "natural justice"? You see, working people understand these concepts because they work with them every day in a way you never have. The labour minister flatly rejected the proposition. And remember this: it was a proposition that would have had support workers back in schools before Monday morning to have prepared those schools for youngsters on Monday at the beginning of school time. It would have had those youngsters back in school on Monday at 8:30 am—am I close? Or 9 o'clock. I don't know when elementary schools—

**Ms Martel:** No, 7.

**Mr Kormos:** At 7? Holy moly.

**Ms Martel:** The agreement says to start by 7.

**Mr Kormos:** So 7 am. You would have had youngsters back in those schools ready to rock and roll at 7 am Monday morning. But do you know what? The Tories rejected that proposition. The Tories denied any co-operation in the process of, "Let's sit around the table and work on it for an hour and try to work this out." No, Stockwell is sitting up in his office, all that velour stuff, and he just, boom, slams the door shut with his boot when the New Democrats try to present this to him. And the Liberals were right there with him, because you see, the Liberals had a chance to join us in encouraging Minister Stockwell to at least discuss this proposition; they didn't.

Another interesting little turn of events, as things get curiouser and curiouser—because I just spoke with Jennifer Stephen. She's a communications director for Service Employees International Union, Local 210, in Windsor. Sister Stephen—you can tell she's with SEIU; she has that purple T-shirt. I don't care where you go in North America, you can spot an SEIU member. They've got the purple T-shirts.

Hold on, friends, because Ms Stephen cast some doubt about the comments made by Minister Stockwell and—who's the House leader for the Liberals?

**Interjection:** Dwight Duncan.

**Mr Kormos:** Dwight Duncan, the member from Windsor. We were excited about the copy of the letter we received, which was dated April 27. This is a brand new letter; this is a current letter to legal counsel talking about

the negotiating committee accepting the board's final offer and the negotiating committee being prepared—there's CUPE 4400, Toronto, and SEIU, Local 210, down in Windsor. Mr Duncan should know this, and I suspect he didn't, or else he would have given this full version of facts, wouldn't he? Because no member would mislead the House. I understand that. So I think Mr Duncan was simply without all of the facts, or else he would have given them to us, because I am not going to suggest that he misled anybody to serve his own political agenda.

**Ms Churley:** But he said he was in communication all the time.

**Mr Kormos:** Well, wait a minute. Maybe he's not talking to the right people. Who knows? But I have a suspicion that he wasn't talking to very many SEIU members, because they would have told him that in fact there is a ratification vote that's going to be held by the membership, that the negotiating committee is recommending that the membership of Local 210 of SEIU in Windsor accept that offer that is the final offer of the board, and the kicker is that the employer can't withdraw the final offer. They can say they're going to withdraw it or say they have withdrawn it all they want, but they can't do it. You see, there is a final offer. So, sorry, Mr Stockwell, and sorrier, Mr Duncan, but you didn't get your facts right, but in the course of not getting your facts right, you tried to create some misimpressions—is that OK? No. I withdraw.

You painted less than a full picture. You left some pieces out of the puzzle and you hid those pieces under the chesterfield, thinking that nobody would ever make the whole puzzle and see the whole picture. Not bad, is it, Mr Speaker? I'm trying. I'm doing my best. He tries to hide some pieces of the puzzle to create an incomplete picture, to try to create the impression that, "Oh no, what are the New Democrats saying? They aren't actively negotiating in Windsor."

Well, my friends, they are, and it's bona fide negotiations and it's negotiations that the membership of SEIU 210 have worked damned hard to achieve. The negotiating committee is going to recommend acceptance by the membership of that final offer, which indeed can't be withdrawn because, Mr Duncan, SEIU 210's position is that if they think they're going to withdraw it, there's going to be some major litigation on bad-faith bargaining at the Ontario Labour Relations Board. I happen to know their lawyer and he's better than yours. I happen to know SEIU's law firm, and yes, McGuinty should have considered retaining them. He might not have had to apologize. The matter perhaps could have been resolved much more quickly. Wasn't that an incredible waste of money of all sorts and shapes.

So here we are, we've got a minister, Stockwell, who still doesn't have a handle on what's really happening in Windsor, who wants to tell us a version of it that best suits his agenda, because his agenda has nothing to do, really, with settling disputes, does it? Nothing whatsoever. His agenda doesn't have anything to do with

getting kids back to school, because these workers are prepared to get the kids back to school sooner than Stockwell is, sooner than Mike Harris is, sooner than Janet Ecker is, sooner than all these silent, soporific Tory backbenchers, never mind their hangers-on, these Liberals.

Do you know what the Liberals are to the Tories? They're like when you go to a friend's place and they've got a young puppy and it mounts your leg. The Liberals are like that with the Tories, they're mounting. The Tories are trying—"Get this Liberal off my leg"—to shake them free. There are the Liberals like little puppies, just going at it on these Tory calves, because they just want to be Tories. These Liberals love you. Those are love strokes. Don't be embarrassed. Just go with it.

I don't think the Minister of Labour has been particularly impressive tonight. I don't think the Minister of Education has been particularly impressive tonight. The Tory backbenchers haven't created any particular impact on their constituents or on this province, and the Liberals have shown their true colours: Tory blue. Is Stockwell Day a Liberal now, or are the Liberals Stockwell Dayites? Man, this day has been full of revelations. We learned what's really happening in Windsor, contrary to what we were told by Mr Duncan and Mr Stockwell. We learned that CUPE 4400 are hard-working people who have wanted to settle the strike from day one. They've wanted to come here and address this legislation and make the whole process—because they've settled their strike for all intents and purposes.

You guys, the Tories, with this legislation, are going to scuttle their settlement. You call that good labour relations? I call it wacko and nuts. Thank you kindly.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Bisson:** I just want to say again, and for the last time, that the opportunity is here for the government to find a settlement. We know that the parties, the board of education of Toronto along with CUPE 4400, have come to an agreement that has made sure the workers would be able to get back to work tomorrow morning, Saturday. They would be able to clean the schools and have the kids back by Monday. Unfortunately, because of the way the Tories have written the back-to-work legislation, it precludes this agreement from going forward if this bill is passed today. Unfortunately, because of the way the bill is written, we're further in a situation where more than likely Minister Stockwell will not be able to, according to his own admission, have people back in school till Tuesday or Wednesday.

We take little solace in saying we told you so. We wish things would be different. We hope you would listen to the arguments that have been put forward. We think it's a reasoned approach. The parties worked hard to come to an agreement. SEIU, as we understand from what my colleague from Welland-Thorold said, were in the same situation again where an agreement had been reached in the interpretation of SEIU. Litigation will decide if that was the case.



But what really is galling here is that we have a situation where government is bringing forward back-to-work legislation in a case where the workers want to get back to work. There's no common sense in any of that.

**Ms Churley:** Before we conclude the sad debate we're having tonight, I just want to point out to all the members that also in the gallery tonight are six members of the Toronto school board, along with some of the workers who are sitting here tonight hoping very much for a solution. We're sad to say—

*Interjections.*

**Ms Churley:** Yes, the members who have been working very hard to find a solution. They were hoping that all of us together tonight could find a solution so that we could walk out of here tonight with a solution where those people could go back to work on Monday.

Let me conclude by saying that you're going to wear this. If these kids are not back in school by Monday, it's going to be on your heads and on the Liberals' heads. The tables have been turned here tonight.

**The Speaker:** Further questions or comments? Seeing none, response, the member for Niagara Centre?

**Mr Kormos:** No, thank you.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

Mr Stockwell has moved third reading of Bill 13, An Act to resolve labour disputes affecting the Toronto District School Board and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 2314 to 2344.*

**The Speaker:** Would the members kindly take their seats, please.

Mr Stockwell has moved third reading of Bill 13, An Act to resolve labour disputes affecting the Toronto District School Board and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Caplan, David	Kells, Morley	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Snobelen, John
Clark, Brad	Maves, Bart	Spina, Joseph
DeFaria, Carl	Miller, Norm	Stockwell, Chris
Duncan, Dwight	Molinari, Tina R.	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Munro, Julia	Tilson, David
Ecker, Janet	Mushinski, Marilyn	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Newman, Dan	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	O'Toole, John	Young, David
Gill, Raminder		

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	Martin, Tony
Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 34; the nays are 8.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

*The House adjourned at 1146.*

## CONTENTS

Friday 27 April 2001

### THIRD READINGS

#### **Back to School Act (Toronto and Windsor), 2001, Bill 13,**

*Mr Stockwell*

Mr Stockwell .....	247
Mr Duncan .....	247, 252, 262
Mr Bisson .....	248, 268, 271, 274
Mrs Marland .....	248
Mr Sergio .....	248, 249, 265, 272
Mr Bradley .....	249, 253, 271
Mrs Molinari .....	249
Mr Caplan .....	251
Mr Kormos .....	252, 273
Mr Gilchrist .....	252
Ms Churley .....	252, 262, 266, 275
Mr Marchese .....	253, 263
Mr Newman .....	261
Ms Lankin .....	263
Mr Klees .....	264, 269
Mr Hampton .....	265
Mr Wettlaufer .....	265
Mr O'Toole .....	268
Ms Martel .....	269, 272
Mr Tilson .....	272
Agreed to .....	275

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Vendredi 27 avril 2001

### TROISIÈME LECTURE

#### **Loi de 2001 sur le retour à l'école (Toronto et Windsor), Projet de loi 13, *M. Stockwell***

Adoptée .....	275
---------------	-----





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**Monday 30 April 2001**

**Lundi 30 avril 2001**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 30 April 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 30 avril 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### WALLEYE WEEKEND

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I am pleased to stand in the House today to invite the people of Ontario to a very special event that will be taking place in my riding on the weekend of May 4 to May 7. The town of greater Napanee will host the annual Walleye Weekend 2001.

The Napanee and District Rod and Gun Club sponsors this well-known fishing derby with the assistance of the local volunteer firefighters. The annual live-release walleye and pike event is based out of Conservation Park in Napanee and the event can attract upwards of 6,000 participants.

Tournament organizers will release some 300 fish, both walleye and pike, that weigh over eight pounds, although record holders from previous years are in the 12- to 14-pound range.

Every year the people of Napanee look forward to the many visitors who flock to this tournament to try their luck in the Bay of Quinte. It is one of the many reasons Napanee is recognized as the walleye capital of the world. So to the organizers and participants of this year's walleye derby, they are wished good luck and a very pleasant stay in greater Napanee which, by the way, has been judged in the Harrowsmith magazine as one of the 10 prettiest towns in Canada. So do make some time this weekend, and if you're in the Napanee area, come by for this very popular event.

#### AGRICULTURAL FUNDING

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Last Tuesday evening the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Mr Coburn, came to my riding to visit with a number of agricultural people.

This was an important meeting for, as I have mentioned in this Legislature before, and will continue to reiterate, agriculture is the second-largest economic factor in Durham region. In fact, it's the second-largest factor in the province.

A variety of key agricultural issues were brought to the table that evening: concerns with disaster relief

insurance, financial problems farmers are facing due to subsidies received by their American and European counterparts and, most important, how farmers perceive the future of agriculture in Ontario and especially in my riding of Durham.

Among those who met with Minister Coburn were Dave Frew, Rick Geisberger, Steve Grove, Trevor Nesbitt, Hubert Schillings, Ted Watson, Kevin Werry, Joe Christl, Bert Werry, and Dale Mountjoy, who, by the way, is the president of the Durham region corn producers.

Since 1995, our province has made it very clear that it is behind our farmers all the way. We're looking forward to a made-in-Ontario solution to the problems that are affecting our agricultural producers in rural communities.

It is clear the problem lies with the federal government, which has failed to pick up the challenge. One example was the initiative to grant not just \$70 million as the relief program would have dictated, but \$90 million to help the grain and oilseed producers in this province. That \$20 million speaks volumes about this government's support for agriculture in this province today.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I thought there was a consensus in this province against junk mail arriving in our mailboxes, but you in Oakville, as well as I in St Catharines, may have been amazed to know that the Harris government has sent out yet another piece of propaganda, my guess would be at the cost of at least hundreds of thousands of dollars, perhaps as much as a million dollars, in self-serving, blatantly partisan government advertising. Mr Speaker, you would like to know that the Premier has his picture in here, smiling, with a message from the Premier.

Now, is this paid for by the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario? No, it's paid for by the grateful taxpayers of the province of Ontario. The figure is now \$234 million of wasteful spending on self-serving, clearly partisan government advertising. One need only drive down the highways of the province to see the Premier's name on a number of signs advertising himself or his ministers.

I would like to direct a question to the Premier this afternoon if I could—I'm unable to do so, I understand—about this issue. I have not been able to direct a question to the him about this since December, and I understand it'll be May 1 before I have an opportunity to direct a question to the Premier of this province. I'm not allowed

to say why, under the rules of the Legislature, but I'll tell you, by gosh, when he gets back I'm going to be gunning for him.

#### LINCOLN M. ALEXANDER SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** Last Thursday saw the official opening of a newly reconstructed school in my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. Lincoln M. Alexander Secondary School, in Malton, was officially opened by its namesake, the Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander.

Members of this House may think of Malton as just the airport, but it is much more. Malton is a thriving multi-ethnic and multi-racial community, home of people from every walk of life. The new high school builds on the strengths of the two older schools it replaces and on the strength of the close-knit community it serves. Congratulations go out to all those who played an important part in the reconstruction and opening of this school: principal Maurice Hudson and the wonderful teachers and staff members, the hard-working local trustees, superintendent and board employees. But perhaps most importantly, congratulations go to all of the parents and students who are the heart and soul of education. My constituents are very proud to see this newly reconstructed school open, and also proud of the great Ontarian who gave it its name.

Lincoln M. Alexander's accomplishments are too many to list in a short time, but I can tell you that he lit up the crowd at the opening. Staff, students and parents there embraced him to their hearts. The former Lieutenant Governor is well known to this House through his years of public service to Ontario.

#### GOLF TOURNAMENTS

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** As a member representing a large northern Ontario riding, I wish to express my outrage at the Premier's pilfering of money from the northern Ontario heritage fund for the benefit of his friends. Your Premier's a crook and he's dirty, and you're the most corrupt government Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. Stop the clock. We're not going to start with language like that. I'd ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr Ramsay:** As revealed in the Saturday and Sunday Toronto Star—

**The Speaker:** Order. I've stopped the clock to give you time again, but you have to withdraw. You can't use the word "crook" in here.

**Mr Ramsay:** I withdraw that, Mr Speaker.

As revealed in the Saturday and Sunday Toronto Star articles by feature writer Bill Schiller, Mike Harris's friends have contrived a way of siphoning off up to \$400,000 to put on golf tournaments in northern Ontario. The Premier's hand-picked ex-general manager of the northern Ontario heritage fund, Royal Poulin, suggested

to the Premier's friend Peter Minogue, of Adams mine fame, a way of setting up a non-profit golf company owned by another set of Harris friends, the Rainos. It was Royal Poulin's son—it's an incestuous little group we have here—who helped Peter Minogue with the details of how to set up the shell company and how to apply for the grant. Like the Adams mine deal, we're seeing another example of how Harris's friends have taken control of the public purse for their own benefit.

This is doubly galling when over the past year, northern Ontario heritage fund assistance has been reduced to a trickle as they realign their criteria. Our region is severely economically depressed. We lose hundreds of people each month to the south as economic opportunities dry up. We look to our heritage fund to bring assistance to an increasingly challenging economy. It is not a private fund for the Premier and his friends. He's like a reverse Robin Hood: he steals and gives to the rich.

1340

#### EDUCATION ISSUES

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I want to communicate to the Minister of Education very briefly in a statement today, and to some extent the Minister of Labour, because we have seen or are witnessing the most demoralized and dispirited educational system and the most dispirited teachers we have ever, ever had to deal with. I'm not quite sure the government is seeing it. Maybe they know it, maybe they don't. My suspicion is they know that their assault on the educational system has been effective inasmuch as people have lost a great deal of interest and desire to do their job well. That's at the teaching front. The workload, through Bill 74, has caused the most serious problems to the profession that I have ever seen, and unless we restore some of that time back to the teachers so they can do their job and do it effectively, we've got a problem.

On the non-teaching side, with your back-to-work legislation, I have to tell you, once again you have dispirited, disillusioned a whole non-teaching profession that has been serving our schools very well. I know that you have to work at this to be able to bring back some cheer into our school system. You need these workers; everybody needs them, teaching and non-teaching alike. You, Minister of Labour, and the Minister of Education have got to do some work to bring back some healthy system in order to get the most effective teaching out of them.

#### MEMBER'S COMMENTS

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I'd like to review the statement made by the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane. If I heard correctly, he said, implying the Premier, "He steals from the rich." I don't think that is parliamentary language and I think it should be examined, and I would expect a full and complete apology.



**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I will review it. If indeed that's what he says—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order, the member for Durham. If he would stop, he could listen to what I am saying. You've made your point of order. Now I'm going to tell you what we're going to do about it. Do you want to hear or not?

**Mr O'Toole:** Yes.

**The Speaker:** OK. The member can withdraw it. I will review it. What happened is at the end of that statement everybody was clapping, I missed the end of it and I believe, if I'm correct, it was at the very end. I already warned him once. He can freely stand up if indeed that's what he said and correct the record. If not, I will be looking at it when the Hansard comes out, and I'll leave it up to the member whether he wants to withdraw it or not. He's going to let me look at it and I will review it.

The member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order—

**The Speaker:** Point of order. Sorry for the interruptions, the member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant.

**Mr Kormos:**—come the day when the Premier starts taking from the rich, I'm on side.

## CANADIAN DRILLING RIG MUSEUM

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** Speaker, my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant hosts many interesting museums. The most unique has to be the Canadian Drilling Rig Museum located at Rainham Centre. This museum has been a five-year labour of love for 25 men, many of whom have worked on rigs and in the gas industry for more than 40 years. Local resident and board president Ted Swent donated the land on which the museum sits. While most of the artifacts have been donated by locals or those who have heard about the museum, board members continually travel across Ontario searching for pieces to add to the current collection.

At the centre of the museum is an 1896 steam-powered Canadian drilling rig which was used to drill wells until 1961. In 1996, the rig was returned to the Haldimand area and has undergone a restoration worth \$30,000. Today, visitors to the museum can see the 62-foot derrick in working order.

In February, the Ontario Trillium Foundation granted the museum \$86,500 to assist with operations.

I invite all members to Haldimand to view this Canadian Drilling Rig Museum.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** In a few moments, the chief government whip will be outlining a process by which we will begin to discuss reforms to the Legislature and specifically, as I understand it, he'll be

talking about using new technology in our processes. We welcome the opportunity to discuss that.

However, if we really want to deal with meaningful reform in this Legislature and deal with the question of government accountability, we will deal with things like the Legislative Assembly Act and recognize—and I say this to the chief government whip—that historically there's always been three-party agreement on changes to the rules.

We don't want a situation like we had last year when the governing party tried to shorten question period. We're going to want to look at changes this government made to the standing orders that make it more difficult for the opposition to do its job. We want to look at changes to the standing orders that won't allow a government to use closure or time allocation three times as often as any previous government has used it. We want a situation where we'll have an opportunity to ask the Premier questions, not just on December 18. We would have liked to ask the Premier questions in January. We would have liked to ask him questions in February and March and the first three weeks in April. In fact, we would have enjoyed asking the Premier questions last Monday. We would have enjoyed the opportunity to ask them Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Unfortunately, we didn't have the opportunity.

Real accountability is about the changes I've talked to and not about the fluff the government is addressing today.

## SCENIC CITY ORDER OF GOOD CHEER

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** A great event was held this past weekend in Owen Sound. A group of dedicated individuals held their annual gourmet festival dinner, auction and entertainment cruise aboard the MS Chi-Cheemaun, otherwise known as the Big Canoe.

For the past three years, the Scenic City Order of Good Cheer has rented the Chi-Cheemaun, which is the ship that sails between Manitoulin Island and Tobermory. This event raises money for harbour projects in the community of Owen Sound and area. This year, we are funding a \$70,000 gazebo right on the shoreline of the Owen Sound bay. The Scenic City Order of Good Cheer turns these projects over to the city upon completion.

This year, as in the past two years, we had two sailings: the first on Friday night and the second on Saturday night. Each night, we welcomed 500 people on board, volunteers and patrons from communities from all over southern Ontario. As well as in the past two years, we had excellent weather with calm seas.

The evenings consist of live entertainment, gourmet dining with a full-course meal of roast duck, roast beef and whitefish, all locally grown. Everyone was entertained as they sailed around White Cloud and Griffith Islands by the Razz Matazz group and by Grey county's very own Peter Irwin, the best Elvis tribute artist in Canada. Both evenings also consist of a live and silent auction.

The Scenic City Order of Good Cheer annually participates in four events which start in the spring. These consist of the Chi-Cheemaun cruise, Harbour Heatwave, the Martel's Rock n' Roll show at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Arena and Summerfolk, which is the most popular folk festival in North America.

The Scenic City Order of Good Cheer would like to thank all the people who took part in this great event.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we begin, we have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the committee for public petitions and complaints from the German state of Bavaria. Please join me in welcoming our special guests.

#### FIRST READINGS

##### PUBLIC SERVICE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE

Mr Tsubouchi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 25, An Act to amend the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993 / Projet de loi 25, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la fonction publique et la Loi de 1993 sur la négociation collective des employés de la Couronne.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Notwithstanding the sheep on the one side there, as my labour minister friend calls it, "an audible from a farm animal," the ayes have it. Carried.

1350

##### CHARITY FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 SUR LES ACTIVITÉS DE FINANCEMENT DES ORGANISMES DE BIENFAISANCE

Mr Crozier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 26, An Act to amend the Safe Streets Act, 1999 and the Highway Traffic Act to recognize the fund-raising activities of legitimate charities / Projet de loi 26, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la sécurité dans les rues et le Code de la route pour reconnaître les activités de financement des organismes de bienfaisance légitimes.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** This is essentially to reintroduce a bill that was introduced in the last session and passed second reading. The bill amends section 3 of the Safe Streets Act, 1999, and section 177 of the Highway Traffic Act to provide that the prohibitions in those sections do not apply to fundraising activities that are conducted by registered charities and are, in addition, permitted by a municipal bylaw or by a resolution of council of the municipality. The short title of the act is Charity Fund-Raising Activities Act, 2001.

##### PROTECTING THE PRIVACY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PERSONNEL ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA PROTECTION DE LA VIE PRIVÉE DU PERSONNEL DU SYSTÈME DE JUSTICE CRIMINELLE

Mr Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to protect the families of police officers and others involved in the criminal justice system / Projet de loi 27, Loi visant à protéger les familles des agents de police et d'autres personnes oeuvrant dans le système de justice criminelle.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** The short name is Protecting the Privacy of Criminal Justice Personnel Act, 2001. The bill would create a board to examine issues regarding the collection, dissemination and safeguarding of personal information about personnel involved in the criminal justice system. The board would be composed of representatives chosen by the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, the Minister of Correctional Services, the Privacy Commissioner and the Chief Justice of Ontario and various police associations. The board would be required to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly each year and meet no fewer than four times along with keeping up with modern technologies to advise all ministries.

##### HUMAN RIGHTS CODE AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LE CODE DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE

Mr Ramsay moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code / Projet de loi 28, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** The purpose of the bill is to provide that persons in Ontario have a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities without discrimination because of



place of residence within the province. The current code does not provide for protection regarding place of residence.

**OAK RIDGES MORaine  
GREEN PLANNING ACT, 2001**

**LOI DE 2001 SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT  
ÉCOLOGIQUE  
DE LA MORaine D'OAK RIDGES**

Ms Churley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 29, An Act to freeze development on the Oak Ridges Moraine and to amend the Planning Act to increase and strengthen the protection of natural areas across Ontario / Projet de loi 29, Loi imposant un moratoire sur les aménagements dans la moraine d'Oak Ridges et modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire de manière à accroître et à renforcer la protection des sites naturels partout en Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** This bill was introduced in the last session, drafted by me and brought forward by my colleague Shelley Martel, the member for Nickel Belt. We are reintroducing this bill. It is the same bill that died on the order paper when the House was prorogued.

It's a bill that would bring back part of the planning system instituted under the NDP. The system would require municipalities, the province and the Ontario Municipal Board to make decisions in a manner consistent with provincial policy statements, not just "have regard for," which is what the government did.

The system was developed after extensive public consultations by a three-member commission headed by John Sewell back then.

This bill specifically brings in measures to protect the Oak Ridges moraine, to freeze development until an agreement is reached by all that we can all live with. Furthermore, the bill goes further than that and also brings back components of the green planning act which the NDP brought in and which this government completely gutted.

Once again, I'm hoping for support from all members. As you know, it passed second reading last time and was actually sent to committee but was never brought forward. So we have an opportunity to do that now.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding the ordering of private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following changes be made for the ballot lists for private members' public business: Ms Dombrowsky and Mr Smitherman exchange places in order of precedence, such that Ms Dombrowsky assumes ballot item number 18 and Mr Smitherman assumes ballot item number 4.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker:** Agreed? I heard some noes.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Basically this is just waiving the notice requirement for the ballot items next week. As you know, there is a specific requirement there, so this just waives it so those two private members may put their legislation forward next week.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 5 and 6.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My colleague from Toronto-Danforth has just introduced a very important bill to try to stop sprawl on the Oak Ridges moraine and to protect it. That bill went through second reading. We already read it last time. It went through second reading. You weren't here to read it. I move, therefore, that we unanimously approve second reading of the bill and let it proceed, because even the Minister of the Environment today acknowledged that she supports protecting the moraine, and there is an urgency to do it.

**The Speaker:** Consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

1400

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** We are meeting the challenges of the 21st century. When we took office, we made a firm commitment to manage government resources in a more businesslike way and to be more accountable, and I can say with pride that we're meeting that commitment. Every year this government tables business plans for each ministry, reporting back on how we manage tax dollars. All business plans are available through the Internet. No other government has done as much in this regard, and we plan to do even better.

But what are we doing about the broader public sector, which consumes nearly 38% of our province's gross

domestic product? Taxpayers have the right to know if their hard-earned dollars are being spent wisely by municipalities, hospitals, colleges and universities, school boards and agencies. This drive for transparency is the cornerstone of our throne speech.

Reforms are needed to ensure that public sector institutions are accountable to the people of Ontario. That's why we plan to empower the Provincial Auditor to require that institutions funded by the Ontario taxpayers use their money wisely. That's why universities and colleges are now required to provide students with accurate information on student loan default rates, graduation rates and employer satisfaction rates for certain programs. This kind of information, available on our Web site, can help a student decide which institution to attend and which program to choose. It means increased accountability.

We now link funding to performance, ensuring that colleges and universities are accountable to students and taxpayers: 2% of college operating grants and 1% of university operating grants were tied to performance in 2000-01. In June our government's Task Force on Effective Schools will make recommendations on how best to organize schools to support continual improvement.

I am pleased to announce today that the performance and accountability measures of this government and of school boards, colleges, universities and hospitals will be gathered and posted on the government Web site. School boards will be required to report annually on how they use their funding. These results will be published.

Our government is ensuring greater accountability to taxpayers. We want these same high standards of accountability to apply to Ontario municipalities as well. The province leads the way in developing alternative ways to deliver services while easing the burden on taxpayers, and we have taken significant steps to promote local accountability as well. Ontario's municipalities are already moving in this direction by measuring performance in high-cost service areas.

Our government will continue to support municipalities in these efforts. That is why I am announcing today that the government will create greater accountability and transparency for taxpayers at the municipal level by encouraging local governments to look for new and innovative ways to deliver services.

The actions that my colleagues and I have outlined today will guarantee a better, more efficient and open government, a government that protects jobs and keeps families safe, secure and healthy, a government that strengthens Ontario.

We are meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I rise in the House today to expand on the theme of accountability as it applies to Ontario's health system.

As you heard in the speech from the throne on April 19, accountability is one of three priorities on which our

government will focus to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Hand in hand with growth and fiscal responsibility, accountability is an essential requirement, and it's required not just of Ontario's government but of all governments and indeed all institutions funded by taxpayers. We must never lose sight of the fact that government is the servant of the people, not its master. Citizens are more than just "customers" or "clients." The entire public sector belongs to them.

And accountability means setting expectations against which we can all be measured. That will be manifested in transparency and openness with the public. Citizens are entitled to transparency in the operation of public institutions, including openness about how they spend, and reporting of their performance and results.

Nowhere is this more important than in the province's health system.

No member of this House would disagree when I say that a strong health system is vital to all Ontarians, and to ensure that our health system is as effective, efficient and responsive as it can be requires clear accountability.

Health care spending has increased at a dramatic pace: 27% in five years, 19% in the past two years alone. However, double-digit increases in health spending are no longer sustainable. At the current rate of increase, within five years health spending would consume 60% of the Ontario government's operating budget, up from 44 cents on every dollar today and 38% since our government was first elected.

Spending pressures of such magnitude raise serious questions about the long-term sustainability of Ontario's health system, questions about the very real possibility that demand might outstrip resources. These pressures challenge us to think differently about how about how we organize health care, about how we deliver these vital services and to which services we should allocate health dollars.

This government is willing to look for new ideas and to think outside the box to help address the question of sustainability. We know that our health care system is not sustainable as it is. We want an open and honest dialogue about the future of our health care.

But let's be clear about what this debate is all about. A discussion about ensuring that we have a health care system for now and in the future means talking about our health care services and how they can be delivered differently. We should not be afraid to ask ourselves how we can provide services better. In fact, we should demand it of ourselves, and that is what this government is doing.

We invite all of the opposition to join us in this debate and we look forward to exploring all of the options in the interest of preserving our publicly funded universal health system.

As we move through this debate, we must ensure that we entrench accountability for health dollars in every facet of our health system. That's why we are moving forward with additional initiatives to ensure accountability within our health system right now.



We believe that when the time comes for a person to have access to the health system, it should be there for that person. We believe that your right to a top-quality health care system deserves to be guaranteed; you should know exactly what you're entitled to when you show up at a hospital or call on community-based care.

A patients' charter to let patients know what they have a right to expect from their health care system is necessary. This government will move quickly to deliver on this patients' charter.

We also believe that patients deserve access to complete information on their health. We have heard from Ontarians that they want more information on the services they receive from the health care system and that they want to make sure they are receiving the services that are being billed to the health care system on their behalf.

Our government has taken steps to make sure that health care fraud is eliminated in our health care system. For instance, Ontario is the only province to contract police officers dedicated specifically to health fraud investigations. As well, we've established a dedicated fraud programs units with a proactive approach to preventing fraud.

I am pleased to announce that our government is moving ahead with yet another initiative to wipe out fraud from our system. Itemized statements will let patients confirm that services billed to OHIP are actually and were actually delivered. We will work with our health care professionals to implement this initiative, which will give patients information on the actual cost of the services they receive.

Running deficits is neither sustainable nor acceptable. The government, municipalities and school boards are now prohibited from running deficits.

Expanding on that, the budget will introduce a measure that would require the entire public sector, including hospitals, to act in a fiscally responsible manner. While economies of scale and common accountability standards promote excellence and efficiency, so do innovation, competition, flexibility and choice. All must coexist in the system.

1410

We have started along the path with hospital report cards. In partnership with the research community and the Ontario Hospital Association, we are building the most advanced public reporting on hospital performance in the dominion of Canada. We want to know if they are operating efficiently, how their service levels stack up against other hospitals and where there is room for improvement. We also want hospitals to benefit from the successes they have achieved and to be able to share their achievements with the rest of the hospital sector.

However, the public deserves to know this information as well, not just government. That's why the government will publish the results of hospital report cards. Teams of experts from the field and top-performing hospitals will work with the lowest-scoring hospitals to help improve efficiency and service. Ultimately, overall funding will then be linked to how well hospitals perform.

At the end of the day, we all benefit, as government, as providers, as patients and as taxpayers, when we know that health dollars are being spent wisely and appropriately. The public holds us accountable for ensuring the provision of health services, now and in the future. And with the announcements I have made today we are continuing to increase accountability to the health care system. As a government, our challenge is to ensure accountability to Ontario's taxpayers and to demonstrate that accountability by performance shows exactly how, and how well, their tax dollars are being spent.

We must all recognize, however, that health care resources will never meet unmitigated demand. Yet through careful and strategic planning for the future direction of Ontario's health system, we can bring stability to the system in the face of competing pressures. Intrinsic to this is a system for which all of us are accountable for money spent, for services offered, for services used and for outcomes.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Statements by ministries? Chief government whip.

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** I am pleased to join my colleagues to further outline our government's agenda—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. If the member could take his seat. Stop the clock. Point of order, member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Speaker: While I regret perhaps being responsible for this member being denied the chance to announce his leadership campaign for the federal Alliance Party, it's my submission, sir, that as a mere Minister without Portfolio and with no duties attached to that ministry without portfolio, he is not entitled to participate in ministerial statements.

**The Speaker:** Yes, we will look. I may ask the member to stand up again. If the Deputy Premier could let the House know if this minister does have a specific responsibility. He might not have heard that, so I'd ask the House leader for the third party to please—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I would ask the member for Niagara Centre to do his point of order and the Deputy Premier will be asked to respond to it.

**Mr Kormos:** With respect, Speaker, it's my submission that a minister without portfolio who has no specific duties attached to that ministry is not entitled to participate in ministerial statements in this House.

**The Speaker:** I'm going to ask the Deputy Premier if he could outline what responsibility the minister with special responsibility has, and then if you could reply to us what special responsibility he has.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Far be it from me to tell the official opposition, but the longer you get to do it, the more time they get to run around and figure out the answer. So you may want to make it quick.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** Mr Speaker, I understand the point of order the member stands on. I would request that by unanimous consent the whip be allowed to stand and make comments with respect to this issue.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid he does not have unanimous consent.

The chief government whip.

**Hon Mr Klees:** On a point of order, Speaker: I would ask that the Chair of Management Board make this statement on my behalf.

**The Speaker:** He can make any statement if it relates to his portfolio, as long as he has the statement, which he probably does.

**Mr Kormos:** On a point of order, Speaker: Again, with respect, and understanding what's attempting to be achieved, House leaders and their caucuses were advised of three ministerial statements today: one by the Chair of Management Board, one by the Ministry of Health, one by a Mr Klees.

The Chair of Management Board has made his ministerial statement, the Minister of Health has made his ministerial statement. We've received copies of this, of course. I trust that the Chair of Management Board would have made the ministerial statement attributed to him in terms of the copies delivered to opposition parties. It's my submission that this ministerial statement can't be cured by merely passing it off. It was identified as Mr Klees's statement; Mr Klees isn't entitled to make a ministerial statement and the copy is identified thus.

**The Speaker:** I'm afraid he can and it's going to be the Deputy Premier. They can do that, and I assume that everybody has their copies. Now, the Deputy Premier for the statement.

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I am pleased to join my colleagues to further outline our government's agenda of growth, accountability and fiscal responsibility.

Our government has considered it a priority to consult and to listen to the people of Ontario, and equally important, we have consistently delivered on our promises. Increasingly, we are developing new ways of consulting with and engaging the public in dialogue on issues of importance to them and to better understand their views on proposed government policy.

That is why I am pleased to inform the House today that consistent with the belief that government exists to serve people, and not the other way around, the government will expand its use of the Internet to help bring citizens closer to their government. The goal is to ensure citizens' access to a wide range of tools and information that will enable them to participate more fully in the democratic process.

As the first step toward e-democracy, the government will consult and review opportunities for the use of technology to build accountability and transparency in government. The possibility of increasing citizen participation in the democratic process is available to us. New changes to technology ensure this. Improved audio

and video capabilities offer effective tools to help guide citizens on-line.

Increasing use of voice recognition software has the potential to allow the disabled access to the democratic process in a significant way. The privacy and security of information exchanged between the government and the public is, of course, paramount.

We will consult with providers to determine the best means of ensuring the protection of our citizens as we investigate new ways of incorporating technology into service delivery, policy development and the legislative process.

Constantly evolving software and hardware capabilities are opening new channels through which e-democracy may be explored. On-line remote voting for elected officials, Internet consultation and feedback opportunities allowing for significant voter input and direct access to legislation and related statutes are just a few of the possibilities that can be explored.

It is important to note that these electronic capabilities are becoming increasingly affordable for all Ontario families, and access through public libraries, school boards and government locations help ensure that digital democracy can be available to all.

Utilizing these new and innovative methods of communication, we as elected representatives can better understand the wishes of our employers, who are the people of Ontario. As Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor read in the throne speech, the 21st century demands that Ontario's democratic process be modern and responsive.

We will propose that the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly explore reforms that will expand the use of technology as a tool of the democratic process. We are committed to making Ontario a world leader in this area. The digital age has arrived. We intend to embrace the new era and the possibilities it offers to make government more accessible, accountable and efficient.

1420

Governments that fail to improve service and accountability are not being faithful to the mandates they have received from the voters and will fail their expectations. This government has made a practice of keeping its word, of taking on the challenge of fixing government, and it is in that context that I am pleased to inform the citizens of Ontario and the House that the government will review how its policies and procedures could be changed to save taxpayers money and to improve service.

We have transformed from a government that offers public services through long lineups and counters to one where the public can reserve a campsite, order a birth certificate or register their business online. We continue to search for other ways to improve service delivery.

Numerous inquiries and comments from constituents and stakeholders, frustrated with government policy or service delivery, stand as proof that there is yet more to be done in this area.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I cannot believe that any Minister of Health under a Mike



Harris government would have the gall to stand up in this place and talk about accountability in health care.

This is exactly the same government that has just allowed a private clinic to be set up with no public tender, in fact, without any public discussion because they were afraid there might be a public backlash to their intention to go ahead and set up a for-profit clinic to provide publicly funded care. The Minister of Health last week responded to a question about accountability on this particular contract by saying, "Well, after all, it was a private sector contract and we have no control over it at all," even though it is being fully funded with public taxpayer funds.

This government is so bent on pursuing its ideological agenda to let its private sector, for-profit friends make a profit from health care, they don't even want to ask the questions of whether there is any accountability in the private sector. They are pursuing this agenda despite all of the evidence, every bit of evidence that has been produced from other jurisdictions when it comes to private sector delivery of health care, or from the private sector initiatives this government has undertaken in other areas where the Provincial Auditor himself has said these initiatives aren't saving money; in fact, they are costing money. The government doesn't want to concern itself with accountability when it comes to its privatization agenda, nor does it want to talk about its own accountability.

Today's focus for talking about broader public sector accountability is really on the hospital sector. This government is very good about wanting to hold others accountable in order to avoid any accountability or any sense of responsibility that it might take unto itself. So today it says, "We're going to release the hospital report card." This is one thing I will agree with: this will be good news. Let the public see how public hospitals in Ontario are in fact performing despite all the restrictions and restraints that have been placed on them by the Mike Harris government. Let the public know what those report cards are starting to show. They're starting to show that because of this government's cutbacks, people who have been discharged into the community quicker and sicker because of hospital cutbacks are coming back into those same hospitals sicker than before and costing the hospital system more money than if there had been a decent amount of money provided to those hospitals to provide services in the first place.

Where was the accountability of this government when one of its first actions was to take \$800 million out of hospital budgets without looking at any of the consequences for patients, without concerning itself at all about the level of care that might be needed?

This government wants to talk now about tying hospital funding to performance. I ask, what does that mean when you step past the rhetoric of this Mike Harris government? Does this mean that those hospitals that send patients out sooner, quicker, are going to get more money because they send patients out quicker? Does it mean that the hospital that shuts down more of its

hospital beds, puts more of its emergency rooms on critical care bypass so that people can't get care in the nearest hospital, is going to look efficient, is going to get more money?

The government's not accountable in this matter either. When we tried to ask about what's happening with emergency rooms being full, being overcrowded, the government's response was to say, "We simply won't release those figures any more." So much for public accountability when it comes to the performance of hospitals.

The government wants to look at efficient funding for hospitals, equitable funding for hospitals. It might go back to the funding formula that it has been sitting on for at least two years, and maybe more now, where hospitals have said, "If we're going to have this new funding formula in place, fair and equitable funding for hospitals, you've got to provide us with some new method of funding." He's had that formula for at least two years and has not been prepared to put the resources into it. In fact, what has the government done with hospital funding? They've provided one-year funding. Often by October the hospitals find out what they're going to get to be able to run their services the next year, and then this minister has the gall to come into this House and talk about the importance of strategic planning. I ask him, how can hospitals do any strategic planning unless there is some long-term funding, the kind of long-term funding that we've been calling for and the hospitals have been calling for for years?

I could go on, if I had more time, to ask where the accountability is in a government that's going to look at hospital funding but hasn't been prepared to put the resources into home care funding. Their idea of accountability was to ration services for people who need care at home, not based on need but just based on the government's arbitrary decision about how much care they were prepared to provide, never relating it back to the fact that they just cut money from hospitals and hospitals were putting more patients into the community.

I could go on and talk about simply making it possible for private, for-profit providers to make bigger profits providing those long-term-care beds we've never seen, but maybe I can best conclude by saying I believe this is a government that has been far more concerned about public relations than it has about its own accountability. The public accountability starts with government, and we have none here at all.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Another day where the government repeats speeches about accountability. What we'd like to know and I think the people across Ontario would like to know is this. We have nurses who are underpaid and who are working under greater stress than ever. We have hospitals that are forced into deficit. We have schools that are so underfunded that they cannot provide the special education programs that children need, or their extracurricular activities or the necessary support staff. But at the same time we find out that this government is funnelling

hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Premier's golfing buddies, and guess what for: to run golfing tournaments that nobody wants to go to. That's what we want accountability on. How is it that this government has money to funnel to the Premier's golfing buddies when the things that ordinary people need are being ignored? That's where we want some accountability.

The Chair of Management Board talks about how they're going to give the auditor more powers. The auditor already pointed out in his last report that this is a government, in its dealings with our hydroelectricity system, that is going to sell off the money-making assets at bargain basement prices to its corporate friends while sticking the taxpayers of Ontario with the debt. How about some accountability there? Then, as we learn every day, the taxpayers of the province are going to get hit again on this deal because they're going to pay higher prices for electricity. That's where we'd like some accountability.

We understand that you can make a lot of money buying up the assets of Ontario Power Generation cheap and then selling the power into the United States at American prices that are much higher than our own. But where's the accountability for the citizens and the taxpayers and the hydro ratepayers of Ontario?

The Minister of Health boasts about this, he boasts about accountability, but we know that this government has set up a private, for-profit cancer treatment clinic at Sunnybrook hospital, and they won't give us a copy of the contract; they won't give any information about how there's not enough money for cancer treatment elsewhere in the province but they've got money for a private, for-profit clinic. That's the kind of accountability we want, not this shallow reannouncement that we hear every day.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** The Minister of Health's continued rhetoric of accountability is impossible to believe, given that this same minister has continuously refused the New Democratic Party's demands to produce the copy of the contract between Cancer Care Ontario and the private, for-profit clinic running the after-hours services at Sunnybrook. He also refuses to produce the copy of the funding agreement between the Ministry of Health and Cancer Care Ontario with respect to that, and yet he says that citizens are entitled to transparency in the operation of public institutions, including openness on how they spend. Where is the transparency? Where is the openness?

1430

He talks about bringing in measures that will prohibit hospitals from running deficits. I remind the minister that in the late 1980s, the policy implemented in the Ontario government was to prohibit deficits in hospitals. That was continued throughout the entire New Democratic government period of 1990 to 1995. In 1996, when you indiscriminately slashed hospital budgets, you changed the policy to allow them to run deficits. Now you're saying they are not being accountable.

Minister, how are you going to enforce that? You refer to school boards where you've passed a law that makes it

an offence for school board trustees, paid trustees, to plan for a deficit budget. Are you going to criminalize the volunteers on hospital boards? They are asking that question out there. Are you going to bring in director liability? We want to know what your mechanisms are.

Lastly on accountability, you talk about an honest dialogue in terms of health care reform, and you frame it in terms of the need to debate who will deliver the services. What about debating a strategy of government being committed to determinants of health, of what it means when there's a growing poverty gap, when we have more homelessness, when we have bad air and bad water, when we have inequalities in education? How does that promote a sustainable health care system? What about a debate on shifting from illness treatment to illness prevention? What about home care based on need, not based on arbitrary limits of rationing? Primary care that doesn't have medical doctors as the gatekeepers? Those are the things we want to debate. Our question is, will your debate be honest enough for those things to be on the table?

## INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** On Tuesday, April 24, 2001, the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane rose on a question of privilege to indicate that his rights and privileges as a member had been abused by the actions of the assembly's former Integrity Commissioner and that there had been interference with an officer of the assembly within the meaning of paragraph 4 of section 46(1) of the Legislative Assembly Act.

In particular, the member indicated that pursuant to the Members' Integrity Act, he had lodged complaints with the former commissioner about an alleged conflict of interest involving the Premier, that the former commissioner had investigated and dismissed the complaints, that the former commissioner's responses to his complaints were "unusual and to some extent curious," and that a press report had subsequently quoted the former commissioner as saying that he had relied on a friend who was not a member of staff to assist in writing the report clearing the Premier of any wrongdoing.

The member was of the view that there had been an interference while the former commissioner was considering his complaint, that the Speaker should investigate and rule on what transpired, and that he had a right to have the Integrity Commissioner—not an outsider—decide his complaint.

The member for Niagara Centre (Mr Kormos), the government House leader (Mrs Ecker), and the member for Windsor-St Clair (Mr Duncan) also made submissions.

I have had the opportunity to review our precedents and the usual parliamentary authorities on this matter. Let me preface my substantive response to the issue by saying that some members would have the Speaker "investigate" the allegations. However, the role of the Speaker is not so much to investigate as it is to rule on



questions of privilege raised by the members drawing salient facts to the attention of the House.

Turning to the substance of the concerns raised by the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane, let me say two things.

First, an allegation that there may have been interference with an officer of the assembly may well raise privilege issues in a proper case. Erskine May states, at page 125 of the 22nd edition, that the House will treat as contempt "acts directly tending to obstruct their officers in the execution of their duty...." But for there to be a *prima facie* case, the facts drawn to the attention of the Speaker must tend to support the claims being made. Some serious allegations have been made in the case at hand, but it does not appear from various members' submissions that the former commissioner was interfered with in his duties; on the contrary, it appears that he actually solicited the assistance.

This case should be contrasted with the case that was the subject of my May 18, 2000, ruling, where a *prima facie* case of contempt was made out in circumstances where the Information and Privacy Commissioner, in a special report to the House, indicated that a government ministry had frustrated an investigation into the release of personal financial information by the Province of Ontario Savings Office.

My second point is that addressing the issues raised in the question of privilege entails interpreting the Members' Integrity Act. However, members will know from my previous rulings on this subject that Speakers should generally avoid interpreting or giving legal advice on legislation.

For these reasons, I find a *prima facie* case of privilege has not been made out.

In closing, I'd like to thank the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane for raising this matter.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PRIVATE HOSPITALS

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** The question is for the Minister of Health. The Premier appeared on TV this weekend and dropped a bombshell on Ontario's working families. He said he is considering allowing private hospitals to make a debut on the Ontario scene. We searched through your campaign platform and found no mention whatsoever of private hospitals going into Ontario. On the contrary, here's a promise you and the Premier made at the time of the last campaign: "Our government is fully committed to the five principles of the Canada Health Act, including universal access to a publicly funded health care system."

My question to you today, Minister, on behalf of Ontario's working families, is, when did you decide to break this promise? Was it prior to the election actually

occurring, or is this something you and the Premier recently decided?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** There has been no breaking of any promise, certainly not with respect to health care. I hope the honourable member agrees with us on this side of the House that everyone in this province, regardless of where you live or how much you make, should get the health care, the medically necessary services, you need, when you need it and from the publicly funded, universally accessible health care system.

How you get those services within that context—I believe we have a responsibility as a duly elected government to look at all the possibilities, not with an eye to any particular ideology or any particular frame of mind, but simply from the frame of mind that we have to have pragmatically the best delivery of the best services. In many cases, that is the public sector. In many cases, that's the private sector even now. We've had private sector delivery of publicly funded health care since we've had publicly funded health care.

**Mr McGuinty:** I want to draw your attention to a release put out by your predecessor on March 3, 1999, and it reads as follows:

"Attention news/health editors:

"Harris government protects public health care—private hospitals to close.

"Health Minister Elizabeth Witmer announced today that the government is closing two private hospitals ... as part of its ongoing efforts to protect Ontario's public health care system....

"Protecting access to our public health care system has been an important ongoing priority for our government," said Witmer. "By taking this action, we are ensuring that patients have equal access to high-quality publicly funded health services."

Minister, how can you tell us before the election that private hospitals threatened health care for our working families, but that today suddenly they can actually be working families' best friend?

**Hon Mr Clement:** The real issue before this House and before the Ontario public is, how do we ensure that we have a sustainable, publicly delivered health care system, not only for future generations but indeed for present generations? The honourable member must be aware by now that in the last two years alone public funding for health care has increased by 19%, 27% over the last five years of the Mike Harris government. This is the challenge. Right now, the tools in place will almost ensure that the current system will not be sustainable in the long run. It will not be there for present and future generations. We have an obligation within the context of public funds, within the context of universal accessibility, within the context of no member of our society being denied access to medically necessary services on the basis of money—within all that context—to make sure we deliver it in the best way, the cheapest way, the most effective way, the safest way.

That is our goal. If he is not part of that goal, that is his business. But that is the goal of the Ontario public as well.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, that's a lovely and elaborate dance, but I wonder if you and the Premier might do-si-do back to the question.

I specifically brought to your attention the fact that just a little over two years ago you made a specific commitment to shut down private hospitals because you said they were not in the interests of universally accessible and publicly funded health care for our families. Why is it that your predecessor said private hospitals were a bad thing, but now you and the Premier are telling us that they are in fact a good thing? Can you please now tell us exactly why you came to this flip-flop so that Ontarians better understand where you're going on this matter?

1440

**Hon Mr Clement:** I am disappointed that the honourable member, as the leader of his own party, is seeking to play politics with a very serious issue. I guess it's his right to do that. Every leader throughout this country who is worth the term knows the truth, that the current system is unsustainable, that the status quo is not acceptable. The leaders in Nova Scotia know that; the leaders in Saskatchewan have said that; Health Minister Allan Rock has said that; the former Premier of Saskatchewan, Roy Romanow, has said that. He can bury his head in the sand, he has that right, but that is not leadership.

As to the position of former governments on this issue, I need only quote a former Liberal Ontario Health Minister, Elinor Caplan, who said, "We are seeing them (the NDP) force the private sector out of the delivery of health services, all in the guise of health reform, and ... what is important in my experience as a former Minister of Health is not so much who delivers the service but the result" of the service. We on this side agree.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** New question, the leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** My question is for the same minister. Minister, you and the Premier have become so fond of private hospitals, I can only assume you know something about them that Ontarians don't. So I will ask the minister now to share with us any evidence, any studies showing that private hospitals not only deliver a profit to their owners and operators but also deliver equal or maybe even better-quality care to Ontario's working families. Would the minister kindly share those studies and those data with us here and now?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I'd be happy to share with this House exactly what the Premier did say. Perhaps that would enlighten the discussion for this afternoon.

If we're going to have a universal system, if we're going to guarantee health care to every citizen of Ontario, we should not be afraid to say, "Can the private sector run this hospital better? Can they provide the service better? If they can, why should we fear that?" We should welcome that.

I am fully in agreement with my Premier. There are cases in the health care system where the public sector delivers the health care better, cheaper, safer, more qualitatively than the private sector. There are instances in our health care system now, as we speak, where the private sector delivers that health care for publicly funded, universally accessible use better, cheaper, safer faster.

We should not be afraid to ask the questions. If you are afraid to ask the questions, I say to the honourable member, you are not part of the solution; you are part of the problem.

**Mr McGuinty:** It's not the questions; it's the answers that Ontarians are afraid of. We're looking to you for answers. I've put a number of questions to you and you've refused to come up with the answers. If you have no studies, Minister, is it not being irresponsible to float this idea of private hospitals?

There is quite a bit of evidence when it comes to privately owned and operated hospitals, and you should be aware of that. Take a look at the New England Journal of Medicine. It reported in 1999 that care for seniors in the US cost 16% more in private hospitals than in public hospitals. In Australia, studies now show that privately owned hospitals resulted in longer waiting lists and increased costs. In Alberta, we now know that private cataract operations mean longer waits and greater costs.

In the absence of your evidence and in the face of mine, we've got to ask ourselves here, is this really about improving health care for our working families or is it really about ideology and helping out your friends in the private sector?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I encourage the honourable member to talk to some real doctors rather than spin doctors 24 hours a day. That would be the start of a solution on this issue.

There is no question that this is part of a comprehensive debate that has to occur in our province and in our country. Indeed, we took our lead from the honourable Minister of Health, Allan Rock, who has said that the current system is not sustainable. We take our lead from the new head of the Romanow commission, the Honourable Roy Romanow, Premier of Saskatchewan, who says the current system is not sustainable. So the Premier did say we have to turn over every rock, we have to look at every possible solution in a very pragmatic way, not being blinded by ideology, not being blinded by the status quo and the protection of those special interests, but to do the right thing on behalf of the people of Ontario, which is to guarantee better, safer, more accessible health care and health care that is there when they need it. That is our mission on this side of the House.

**Mr McGuinty:** It just seemed to me, Minister, if you liked this notion of private hospitals, that you have some evidence that would support that they in fact deliver at least the same quality, and ideally even better, care and that they also, at the same time, cost less.

Let's be straight with working families about what you are talking about here. You want to take the same amount



of money that you would give to public hospitals and give it to a private hospital without any reduction in the quality of care, but in the case of the private hospital they're going to have to generate a profit, they will be subject to property taxes and they can't issue charitable receipts, so that's going to make it very difficult when it comes to fundraising. I don't know of many volunteers who sign up to work for a business. You don't get many volunteers over at Wal-Mart these days.

Given all that and given the fact that you could produce no evidence, no studies, today that would show that private hospitals will improve health care, is it not irresponsible for you to advance the cause of private hospitals when you have no evidence and no factual basis for putting this forward?

**Hon Mr Clement:** With the greatest of respect to the honourable member, I wouldn't accuse this side of the House of irresponsibility. Another definition of irresponsibility would be to deny that there is a problem in the health care system, to deny that there is a sustainability gap and to stick your head in the sand and say, "Everything should march merrily along in the same old way," ensuring that we have future problems for future generations. We are not prepared to do that on this side of the House.

The honourable member knows we have nursing homes run by the private sector now, we have laboratories run by the private sector, doctors in their private practice are part of the private sector and home care is part of the private sector. We have private sector health care delivery of publicly funded, universally accessible programs even as we speak.

What is wrong with asking: can we do it better, can we deliver better services for the people of Ontario, safer, quicker, when they need it? On this side of the House we are not afraid to ask these questions. On that side of the House they bury their heads in the sand.

## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Deputy Premier. We know that homeowners across the province are being hit with higher property taxes and we know that municipalities are desperate for property tax revenue because of the costs that you've downloaded on them.

But at the same time that homeowners are paying higher property taxes, we are told that your government is being lobbied to give big property tax breaks to private golf courses in the greater Toronto area, who also happen to be big financial contributors to the Conservative Party.

I think this is absurd, but I've already seen your government's largesse for the Premier's golfing buddies. What I want you to confirm today, Deputy Premier, is that your government will not change the property tax assessment system in any way to benefit private golf course owners at the expense of homeowners.

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** To the member opposite: as he may be aware,

my predecessor as Minister of Finance, the Honourable Ernie Eves, appointed the member for Elgin-Middlesex, Mr Beaubien, to look into the Ontario Property Assessment Corp and to report on that. That report has been prepared by the honourable member and will be released today, I believe.

That's an important report in terms of the functioning of that municipally run property assessment corporation. As you know, that is controlled by the municipalities. Their councillors comprise the board, with the exception of, I think, two appointees by the province.

They are an important board in Ontario. There is a reasonable prospect for some reform in that area and in that regard I invite you to read Mr Beaubien's report.

**Mr Hampton:** What we've just heard, though the Deputy Premier tried to talk around it, is that this government is indeed in the middle of a strategy to give private golf course owners a tax break when the homeowners of the province are taking it in the neck.

Deputy Premier, just to confirm, this document I have is from a very well connected Conservative lobbyist. It spells out the strategy being used to lobby the Premier's office, your office and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation to obtain property tax decreases for millionaire golf club owners like Club Link and Kaneff.

1450

The document also details Mr Beaubien's report and how that's going to figure into it. This review of the Ontario property assessment system is going to be timely so that you can give these tax breaks.

Minister, don't you see something wrong with this? Don't you see something wrong with giving the Premier's golfing buddies even more tax largesse while you go after the homeowners across this province to pay higher property taxes?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** The member opposite of course is making an assumption with respect to the contents of the budget to be delivered here on May 9. He'll have to wait until May 9 to see what changes are in the budget for the current fiscal year 2001-02.

I can say that I've heard suggestions from in excess of 300 different people now about what they'd like to see in the budget, what they'd like to see done on the spending side and on the revenue side and in tax credits in Ontario. I'll be pleased to deliver the budget with the appropriate, responsible choices having been made on May 9.

**Mr Hampton:** I'm going to send you a copy of this document. You should read it. It's from Hugh MacKenzie, who is well connected to your government as a lobbyist. But what's even more disturbing about this is that in talking about the lobbying campaign, it suggests that your predecessor the former finance minister, former Deputy Premier Ernie Eves, should be the person to make sure this happens.

Based on this document from your Conservative lobbyist friends, will you join me in asking for an investigation by the Integrity Commissioner? Under your own rules, Mr Eves is forbidden from taking part in any kind of lobbying, any kind of decision like this for at

least a year. Please assure us that this isn't happening, but also assure us that you'll support an investigation by the Integrity Commissioner to make sure that Mr Eves isn't involved in this contravention of the law.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** What has been handed to me is a letter to someone at a consulting firm dated March 1, 2001. It doesn't seem to be addressed to anyone in government and certainly not to me.

The budget formulation process is, of course, confidential. We preserve the confidence of those who come forward to us with various ideas and suggestions. It's the government's responsibility, through the Minister of Finance, to consider what all parties have to say to us about various proposals they may have about tax reform in the province of Ontario. I would think the leader of the third party would want the Minister of Finance of the day to listen to all people from across the province with respect to whatever their suggestions are—listen, take them into consideration, make responsible choices and deliver the budget in this place on May 9.

#### PRIVATE CANCER CLINIC

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Now that you and the Premier have launched an all-out drive for private delivery of health care, it's more important than ever that we get the facts on your new private cancer clinic out in the open.

Minister, it's our understanding, and I'd like you to confirm or deny, that the private, for-profit company is reimbursed \$3,000 for every course of radiation treatment administered. This is the same amount that is paid for a course of radiation treatment offered in the publicly run system. However, the private, for-profit company is neither staffed nor equipped to deal with a full range of complex radiation treatments. Those complex cases will be referred back to Cancer Care Ontario. So their average costs therefore are significantly lower, thus they can make a profit, but the taxpayer is paying more for less. How, then, do you justify not only the use of the private, for-profit company but one that costs considerably more than the public system, considering the level of care that will actually be available to patients?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'd be happy to put some of the facts on the table as the honourable member has indicated. Cancer Care Ontario has contracted with Canadian Radiation Oncology Services for 1,000 cases at \$3,500 per case, plus \$500,000 for overhead costs. Right now, the ministry pays CCO \$3,000 for each case treated at normal hours, but here's the difference. If we fly those people to Buffalo, if we transport them to Detroit, it costs the taxpayer \$17,000 per case to send a patient to the United States of America. So I would encourage the honourable member to compare apples to apples: \$17 million was the total cost to shuffle off to Buffalo; \$4 million is the total cost of this contract—better cancer care services; better for the taxpayer of Ontario as well.

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, we've absolutely agreed that it is better to treat patients here. But what we've told you is that it is cheaper and more effective and that there is a broader range of quality care in the publicly funded, publicly administered Cancer Care Ontario system. Your comments just proved that. You said earlier on this afternoon that sometimes the public sector delivers better, cheaper care. Well, this is an example, and it's a real-life example, of how your government is now paying more for less and profit is being made at the expense of range and complexity of care for the patient. On top of that, you've also agreed to a high-volume bonus of an extra 15% if the private company meets and exceeds your patient quotas.

Let me summarize that for you. You're paying more for less; you're not only rewarding but you're building in incentive for revolving-door medicine. Is this the Tory vision of cost-effective, quality health care?

**Hon Mr Clement:** In fact, we're paying less than the alternative; we're giving it closer to home right here in Ontario, rather than in a foreign jurisdiction, so they can be closer to their families and the support services they need in their community. I'll stand in the House every day to defend that.

Perhaps, to settle the issue, the patients themselves should have the last word. We received, on a no-names basis, some letters that were unsolicited to Cancer Care Ontario and to the government after these patients received care. They said things like, "We're so impressed with the excellent quality care and services which you and your staff provided that we felt compelled to share our experience with others." Another says, "We offer our sincere congratulations and thanks to the entire staff. In particular, we congratulate Dr McGowan for coordinating and running the clinic, which is providing timely treatment for many cancer patients." I couldn't have said it better myself.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Premier Harris has been using some rather extreme language about health spending. He's almost scaremongering, in our opinion, in an attempt to force a two-tier health plan.

Most jurisdictions use health spending as a per cent of gross domestic product to measure health spending. In Ontario, when Premier Harris became Premier, health spending as a per cent of gross domestic product was 5.7%. Today it is down to 5.3%. That is the measurement that most jurisdictions use to measure a government's commitment to health care.

My question is this: can you tell us why Premier Harris would be saying we are heading toward bankruptcy when health spending as a per cent of gross domestic product is lower today than it was 10 years ago, substantially lower than when you became the government?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** Of course, is that because of the tax reduc-



tions, reduction in red tape, downsizing of government? With the finding of efficiencies, we've managed to grow the gross domestic product of the province dramatically in the past six years. That's what makes the difference in terms of the size of the gross domestic product in Ontario. Base operating spending will be \$22.5 billion in 2000-01. Per capita spending on health in 1994-95 was \$1,625. In the third quarter of the fiscal year 2000-01, per capita spending on health was \$1,928.

**Mr Phillips:** The fact is that this government's commitment to health care has declined as a per cent of gross domestic product. The Premier said that health spending will go up 5% a year. The government's health spending has gone up 4% a year. On average since you became the government, spending has gone up 4%.

The reason for this is to say that Premier Harris is trying to frighten Ontario into saying, "We've got to move to two-tiered health." I would say to the people of Ontario, we now spend less per capita in Ontario than the rest of the provinces spend on health care—less. We spend dramatically less on health care as a percentage of our gross domestic product than we did five years ago or 10 years ago. Health spending has gone up 4% a year when Premier Harris said the cost went up 5%.

**1500**

I repeat my question: where is this bankruptcy coming from if we now are spending less on health care as a percentage of our gross domestic product than we did when you became the government? Where is this bankruptcy coming from?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** We are currently spending in the province of Ontario \$2.5 million per hour, \$42,800 per minute and \$1,928 for every man, woman and child in the province.

The Ontario Hospital Association, the Fyke commission in Saskatchewan, the government of Nova Scotia, almost every government in this country has recognized that we have a spending crisis in health care and that it would be irresponsible not to address that spending crisis to ensure that we have sustainable long-term health care.

There's a particular politician whom I quote here now, who said, "I am convinced there is enough money in the health care system. I don't think we are spending it as effectively as we can." His name is Dalton McGuinty, the Kitchener-Waterloo leadership debate, September 22, 1996.

#### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question is for the Chair of Management Board of Cabinet. The government of Ontario is responsible for a number of services which are delivered by the civil service. What steps are we taking to ensure that the civil service continues to operate top-notch services for the people of Ontario and to ensure that these services will meet their changing needs?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** We believe in government that

people are the most valuable resource that we have in delivering efficient, effective and reliable services to the people of this province.

The Ontario public service is structured primarily by the Public Service Act and it sets out how government will shape its human resource policies and practices. The Public Service Act is now more than 120 years old and parts of it no longer really suit the demands of today's business practices.

Today I introduced legislation which, if passed, will help make the public service better able to deliver the services Ontarians need and deserve. The legislation, which will provide for more efficiency and flexibility, will also introduce choice and democracy to the way in which the civilian members of the Ontario Provincial Police are represented.

**Mr Dunlop:** I've received a number of phone calls and letters from people in my riding who are concerned that civilian members of the Ontario Provincial Police who work closely with uniformed officers are not represented by the OPP association but through the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union. Some of those I have talked to have led me to believe that the OPP association can better represent their interests than OPSEU.

As the minister will know, civilian members of municipal police forces are represented by their local police associations. Will the minister grant the civilian employees of the OPP the same right to be represented by their police association?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I thank the member for the question. I'm also aware of these concerns because, quite frankly, I've received hundreds of letters and phone calls from civilian members of the OPP, as has my colleague the Solicitor General.

As an employer, though, the government cannot unilaterally change the collective bargaining unit of a group of employees even if the members themselves request it. But what it can do in this case is amend the act to allow for people to democratically choose the bargaining unit that represents them.

The legislation I have introduced today, if passed, will make it possible for these people to decide, through an open and democratic process, whether or not to join the Ontario Provincial Police Association if they feel in fact that it represents their interests.

We are committed to maintaining a public service which is effective, efficient and reliable, and we will continue to look for ways in which we can improve the services to the changing needs for the people of Ontario.

#### PRIVATE CANCER CLINIC

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, I have to tell you that I don't believe your government has ever been interested in saving medicare because every bit of evidence is that every action your government has taken has undermined health care at every step of the way.

I believe you've been setting up the publicly funded health care system for failure and then you offer priva-

tization as a totally phony answer, and the best example of exactly that is the way you've handled cancer care.

Minister, I remind you that it was your government that created the crisis in waiting lists for cancer care; that your government delayed in setting up the new cancer treatment centres; that your government shut down the radiation therapy training program, so we have a shortage of radiation therapists; that it's your government that's refused to act on the physician shortages, so we have a shortage of cancer care doctors. Now you say you're going to be able to fix the mess that we've made by setting up this new private clinic.

Minister, I need to understand something very basic. I need to understand how this new private clinic is in any way going to deal with the real problems facing cancer treatment in this province. How exactly is this private clinic going to get the radiation therapists or the cancer care doctors that you have refused to provide to the public system? Exactly what does this private clinic do for patients that you couldn't or wouldn't do for the public system?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Speaker, in response to the first part of her question, "setting up for failure," we've funded the system 19% more over the last two years, 27% more over the last five budget cycles. That is not setting up for failure, that is racing, given the cuts to the federal health transfer, racing to try to make sure the system is sustainable, at least for the short run. I believe we need no tenders of apologies on that.

When it comes to Cancer Care Ontario, the after-hours clinic, 149 patients have gone through, 149 patients who don't have to leave their families behind, 149 patients who have a support network, 20 to 23 per week. If we go on at that pace, I have been assured we will get through the entire waiting list of people who were going to go out of country, out of this province, to Buffalo, to Detroit, to wherever, by the end of May, the beginning of June. That is the kind of commitment we've made to make sure that Ontarians get the service delivery they need on such a terrible scourge as cancer right here in their own community, in their own province.

**Mrs McLeod:** Minister, we all want to see the waiting lists for cancer treatment reduced, but I need to understand something that you don't want to answer. I need to understand exactly how a private clinic is going to get those same radiation therapists, those same cancer care doctors, when exactly the same man who failed to find those people to shorten the waiting lists in the publicly run clinics is now running your private clinic. I just don't understand that, Minister.

I don't understand why, if this new private clinic is actually going to enable patients to be treated faster in Ontario, you couldn't have brought exactly that same solution fully two years ago so that cancer patients didn't have to wait as long for treatment as they've been waiting in this province.

Your private clinic, Minister, can't cost less. That can't be the answer. There's not a shred of evidence that this private clinic can cost less. In fact, we know you're

going to be paying very hefty premiums to try and fix this crisis. So I ask you to try once more to answer this very basic question: exactly what will the private clinic do for cancer patients that you could not have done for those same cancer patients in public clinics at least two years ago?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I'll answer the honourable member very directly. We were advised by Cancer Care Ontario that nobody would step up to the plate, based on the extension of the current collective agreements and the current situation within Sunnybrook or any other cancer care facility.

If the honourable member has other information, other evidence, tender it. I have already agreed to a value-for-money audit. I'm willing to put the books to the province on the table, put the contract that CCO signed with the third party deliverer on the table. If there's a better way to deliver it, let's look at it. We've said from the very beginning of this question period we want better services, we want more efficient services, we want safer services, we want quicker services. If the honourable members on the other side have a better idea, let's hear it.

## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** For the last four months I've spent a fair amount of time talking to my constituents—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Yes, about 16 to 18 hours a day. As a matter of interest, many of the constituents are very concerned about the accountability issue, whether it be health care, education or whatever. But the key one that they've been addressing over and over again is colleges and universities.

We have Conestoga College in Kitchener. We have a couple of universities in Waterloo. They are large institutions. They have an important role to play. They need to ensure that young Ontarians get the relevant skills they need to get jobs and to keep our economy growing.

**1510**

It was interesting, I just received a letter this morning from one of my constituents asking whether or not these colleges and universities are accountable to taxpayers and students for their performance, and whether or not they are accountable for delivering the services that the constituents, the taxpayers, the students and all Ontarians, of course, need.

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'm pleased to respond to the question from the member from Kitchener Centre.

Actually I was at the University of Waterloo this morning and I think that all of us in this House should be proud of our university and college system. The way that Conestoga, the University of Waterloo, Guelph and Sir Wilfrid Laurier are working together is something that we should all be proud of.

Of course, accountability is very important. It's important because we want to support quality programs and



we want to support quality programs that meet the needs of our students.

Last year we implemented a performance-based funding system. Dollars were distributed on the basis of key performance indicators such as graduation rates and the satisfaction of our employers with the young people who graduated. It does ensure and give information to students and their families about how successful our programs are.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** You've instituted a system of checks and balances. While those checks and balances will measure accountability, what have we done to ensure that accountability? What do you do to ensure that colleges and universities will perform as our taxpayers and our students expect?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** Once again, we want to ensure that our colleges and our universities are accountable to the students and to the parents and of course to the taxpayers, and the students get good information so that they can make good decisions while they choose not only the courses that they take by faculty but each and every program.

Therefore, the college system did very well. My colleague representing Conestoga College would like to know that 91% six months after graduation is the highest employment level for Ontario college graduates since 1989—that's right across the system; this is very good—and Conestoga was a little bit above that average, at 92%.

As a system, employer satisfaction was at 91%; again Conestoga was at 91.6%. He should be very proud, as the rest of us are, about the students and how well—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Minister of Energy: Minister, last Thursday Mr Osborne, the chief executive officer of Ontario Power Generation, admitted that your government intends to sell off over half the electrical power generation capacity in Ontario in the next 12 months. At the same time, two experts on hydroelectricity markets have come forward and said that deregulation will integrate Ontario and American markets and allow wealthy electricity-hungry Americans to deplete Ontario's supply, forcing us to bid against wealthy New Yorkers to buy our own Ontario-produced electricity and will double electricity prices in Ontario.

These are people who've worked at Ontario Hydro, finance experts from the academic community. Minister, why are you so intent on selling off the power generation capacity that belongs to all people in Ontario to international energy corporations whose only interest is to raise the price?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** I don't know where the honourable member has been for the last three and a half years, but this has been a long, cautious and prudent process.

The market design committee, almost three years ago, reported to this government that Ontario Power Generation, in order to make room for new investors and competition in the generation side of the energy market, must vacate its dominance or its 90% position in the domestic market right now. Therefore, it has to sell off plant, lease plant or swap plant. In other words, if we don't do this, Ontario Power Generation will continue to be an electricity monopoly in this province, something that has driven us into some \$38 billion worth of debt in this province. We would continue to do things the old way and we would have no competition in electricity, which will help bring choice, green power and the lowest possible prices to consumers.

I don't know where the honourable member has been, because a market design committee in a public process recommended this some years ago, and the government is getting around to implementing that. It's a positive thing for our economy, a positive thing for jobs and the right direction to go in electricity.

#### Interjections.

**Mr Hampton:** You can tell by the rather tepid response from the minister's own backbenchers that this isn't getting very far.

Minister, this is what Myron Gordon, who is a finance professor at the University of Toronto, and John Wilson, who used to be on the board of directors of Hydro One, say: "Electricity deregulation in Ontario will double our bills, increase the cost of everything ... cause industry and businesses to shed jobs and raise our taxes." That's their point because, as they say, once you open up the market, once you start selling off our generating stations to international companies, they will want to sell the power where they can get the highest price, which is in New York, Detroit, Chicago. The only way Ontarians will be able to purchase electricity will be if we're willing to pay the much higher price.

They point out that this will have repercussions for jobs, for the economy, because the price is going to go higher. Why would you want to do that to Ontario industries, Ontario consumers? Why do you want to push the price higher and put—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Minister of Energy.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** April 27, the Ottawa Citizen: "Financially, Ontario Hydro was out of control for many years. It became a mammoth company with ludicrously high salary costs and serious efficiency and safety problems. It piled up a debt of \$38 billion guaranteed by Ontario taxpayers. Premier Harris had no choice but to dismantle this money-eating giant.... Yes, electricity is the juice of life of this economy. But the recent past has taught us that a monopoly system for providing this commodity is a public policy disaster. Bring on the marketplace." That's a full-page editorial endorsing the direction the government is going in.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, on August 17,

2000—last August—your ministry sent out a communiqué regarding the final round of long-term-care bed allocations. That bulletin said, “The new selection process will be different than the 1998 and 1999” requests for proposals, and it will be designed to encourage new, smaller and non-profit applicants.

Minister, we believe, and most working families can now see, that you instead are bent on further favouring the private sector. In fact, two thirds of all the beds that you’ve allocated so far have gone to the private sector, a major increase to the private industry. But you did say in your bulletin “smaller and non-profit applicants.”

Could you explain to us what is different in the request for proposal? Tell us exactly what will be different. How will it be designed to encourage new and non-profit applicants?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I’m happy to reconfirm to this House that we on this side of the House are responsible for an unprecedented \$1.2-billion investment of the taxpayers’ money for long-term care that will include the construction of 20,000 new long-term-care beds. This has been a bedrock commitment of this government and necessary in this province, considering the lack of investment by previous governments when it comes to long-term care.

There has been an RFP process of which the honourable member speaks. It’s a process that involves competitive tendering from both the not-for-profit side and the for-profit side. The objective is quite simply better health care, better care in the community and better long-term care on a basis that is justifiable when it comes to the taxpayers’ money. Those are the criteria that we use: is it the best care that has been tendered on and the most effective way to deliver taxpayer dollars in the form of new beds? Those are the criteria.

**Mrs Pupatello:** To the Minister of Health, I am asking for an answer to this question about what you supposedly changed about the process to more benefit the non-profit sector, which is what you said in a bulletin that you sent out to that industry. But let me tell you that two weeks later you removed that bulletin from this memo you sent and you decided you’re not going to benefit the non-profit sector. We on this side think you’ve been influenced by the \$360,000 the long-term-care industry donated to the PC Party.

I’d like to tell you what you changed in this new round. What you said was that in the new application process the applicant must own property. Maybe you can tell us where the non-profit sector has an advantage over the for-profit sector when you and I both know that’s the sector that likely doesn’t own property. In fact, you’ve changed the process to further favour the private sector in the allocation of these long-term-care beds. Minister, we expect you to come clean on something you should have said in the last campaign.

**Hon Mr Clement:** The honourable member has taken something a bit out of context. Yes, it is part of the RFP process: to be eligible for consideration you’ve got to own or have an option or a long-term lease on land,

demonstrate that you meet the ministry’s financial land development and operating tests. Yes, we want you to own the property so you can build the building. That is not exactly rocket science. It is there to ensure that we get the most beds, the best beds as soon as possible, so that our long-term care—

**Mrs Pupatello:** It’s about the fastest and who you can get through your friends.

**Hon Mr Clement:** No. This is an RFP process designed to ensure we have the beds on the ground, built, with the ribbons cut and with the residents in the beds as soon as possible.

If the honourable member can’t understand that, maybe she’ll understand this: when it comes to competing for those long-term-care beds, what municipality doesn’t own land?

1520

## EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Labour. I read with considerable interest several articles over the weekend indicating how much effort you personally spent in making sure Toronto kids got back into school today, and yet it seems to me that all I heard on Friday were these dire warnings from the third party that the kids would not be back in school until at least Wednesday. Could the minister please confirm to this House today whether or not the kids are back in school today?

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I first want to thank the members who were here Friday in our caucus and supporting the legislation that I think was a proper piece of legislation, that showed some clear leadership and offered some hope for the parents and children in Toronto and in Windsor and gave them an opportunity to get their kids back in school after many weeks of being off.

I also want to suggest to the members of the House here that I was a little dumbfounded by the position put forward by the NDP during that debate, that (a) there was a settlement in Windsor, when in fact no settlement existed, and they wanted me to withdraw the bill because the settlement, they claimed, was at hand; and (b), which I found very interesting, that they guaranteed this government that schools wouldn’t be open on Monday if we passed this bill because they would ensure that schools wouldn’t be open till Wednesday. I’m very happy to report that 95% of the schools in the city of Toronto and 100% in Windsor are open and operating today.

**Ms Mushinski:** I thank you, Minister, for that response and I want to express to you, certainly on behalf of the constituents, the parents and kids in my riding of Scarborough Centre their gratitude for bringing in legislation that got the kids back into school and saved their school year. There were serious concerns that the school year was about to be lost. Could the minister please assure me today that all the kids will be back into school and that their school year will be saved?



**Hon Mr Stockwell:** It's my understanding, hearing from the directors at Toronto and Windsor, that their school years are not—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I hear the Liberals heckling. I was happy that you voted in favour this time to legislate the support workers back to work. I appreciate the fact, when it came to Hamilton-Wentworth, that you didn't vote in favour of sending them back. So now, as true Liberals, you can go back in the next general election and tell unions that you didn't vote in favour of sending them back and you can tell parents and students that you did vote in favour of sending them back. You're safe on all sides in this one.

I'd like to say that, come tomorrow, I think there will be 100% compliance as far as school openings are concerned. I appreciate the opportunity to say that in future we have to be very certain, when we introduce back-to-work legislation, that we get co-operation in this House, because we can't form part of the collective bargaining process. When leadership is needed, when direction is needed to be taken, I think parents and children can count on one thing: this government acting in a responsible manner.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. In the throne speech, once again the Harris government promised to ensure equal opportunity for those who live with physical and mental disabilities, yet your actions speak louder than empty words and phony promises.

The disabled no longer trust you. You have slashed the funding of the Chatham and District Association for Community Living. Parents are struggling to care for disabled children because of cuts to special services at home, and parents of children at the southwest regional centre live in terror about the future of the centre for their children, who depend on that care.

Minister, you and your government have failed them all miserably. When will you keep your promise and restore the funding that is critical to equal opportunity?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** We have cut no funding for people with developmental disabilities that he speaks to in terms of services offered in his community.

This is a genuine priority for me, it's a genuine priority for this caucus, it's a genuine priority for this government. We've tried to do a substantial amount more for people with developmental disabilities. We were able to seek and achieve the biggest increase in services to support people with developmental disabilities—more than \$50 million this past year—building on the \$35-million budget increase that we got in 1999. We've tried to do a substantial amount to support aging parents who have cared for their adult children for many years in their

communities. We've tried to put more money into special services at home, to provide families with more options. We've tried to put more money into respite care, we've tried to put more money into out-of-home respite care, and we'll continue to make this a substantial part of it. I'll put my record up against anyone in this regard.

**Mr Hoy:** Minister, I don't know how many times you said "tried," but keep trying and try to get it right for these people. You need to tell that to the struggling families and their agencies.

The associations for community living face a funding crisis. There are almost 9,000 people waiting for services. Many of them are from my riding. They need \$440 million for the needs of existing clients and those on waiting lists. The Chatham and District Association for Community Living has followed every requirement that you dictated to achieve the outcome-based performance measures, but still their applications are denied and they remain critically underfunded.

No more rhetoric. Mr Minister, it's your job to fight for the disabled in the budget process. Will you fight to restore this funding?

**Hon Mr Baird:** I reject the notion that the member opposite is suggesting, that we've reduced funding in support of people with developmental disabilities. That is simply not the case. He is dead wrong.

The member opposite quotes what associations for community living say about this government. Let's read what they say. Let's listen to David Barber, president of the Ontario Association for Community Living: "You have rebuilt these channels of communication and re-established the trust." "It's reassuring to have a minister who understands the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families," June Chiu, president of the Toronto Association for Community Living. I could go on. "Your May 5 announcement"—the \$50-million announcement I cited earlier—"demonstrates the government's commitment to individuals and families with developmental disabilities," Sue Dolan, president of OASIS.

We've worked tremendously hard to make this a priority. We've expanded services each and every year over the past two years since I became minister. This caucus, this party, sees it as a substantial priority and we're going to continue to fight for more money.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Recently you provided \$90 million in additional funding to the oilseed producers in Ontario. I must admit that most of the farmers in Ontario are certainly grateful for the help that you provided.

But recently I was reading an article in the Farm Business Journal, and it says, "Competition with low-cost producers such as the United States is nothing new, says Kim Cooper, marketing coordinator with the Ontario Soybean Growers. "We can't compete with the United States in commodity soybeans. With Brazil, we can't do

anything. But the whole premise years ago was that we should be looking at markets in which we would not compete against the United States.”

1530

I realize, Minister, that you can't do anything about low commodity prices, but indicators indicate that we'll probably be facing low prices next year. What is your government doing with regard to dealing with the situation facing the farmers this year?

**Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** As you know, the responsibility for international trade rests with the federal government, and I take every opportunity to encourage the federal government to defend Ontario farmers at the World Trade Organization.

It's essential that the federal government continues to fight for our farmers to eliminate unfair practices and subsidies from our international trading partners.

If it was a level playing field, our grains and oilseed producers would certainly be the frontrunners. They have the capability and the expertise to produce crops efficiently, effectively and competitively. Unfortunately, the field is tilted because of the subsidies that we get from the European Union and from our neighbours to the south.

**Mr Beaubien:** I know that the feds are having difficulty in finding the cheque book and handing out their money. I wonder if you could give them a hand.

In a more serious tone, Minister, what is your ministry doing with regard to opening new markets and doing research in the field of new products with the oilseed, and could you inform the House of any other endeavours that your ministry may be doing?

**Hon Mr Coburn:** Certainly, because the United States is a major player in the global market, it's virtually impossible to avoid competing with them. That's one of the reasons we've worked with our growers, producers and processors to develop new and lucrative niche markets. Ontario's agricultural food industry has earned a worldwide reputation of producing commodities to customer specifications.

For instance, over the past five years we've expanded our market into Japan for food-grade, identity-preserved soybeans. Soy, as you know, is a key part of the diet in Japan. Last year, more than \$290 million worth of oilseeds and oilseed products were exported to Japan from Ontario. The Ontario growers benefit from these new markets in that niche marketing.

committed to spend \$114 million of additional funds to support children in communities around the province.

Last week we had the first discussion about our vision. We talked about early years centres to try to do more to enrich community supports, to provide more supports to parents, to provide a mix of universal supports that are accessible to all parents and to provide substantially more supports to help children who are at risk and to provide children with special needs.

I think all ministers would love to be able to jump the Minister of Finance and announce funding prior to the presentation of the provincial budget. Unfortunately, I'm not in a position to be able to do that, but the announcement of how the government will move forward with the expansion of supports for the early years initiatives will follow the budget on May 9.

**Ms Martel:** Minister, the question was, how much money will you give municipalities from the national children's agenda to support children's services in our communities?

I attended a press conference at city hall this morning, and there were representatives from the city of Toronto, Markham, Ottawa and Kingston who all called on your government to let them know how much money you're going to provide.

You're the government that downloaded services like public health, regulated child care, family resource centres and libraries onto these municipalities without giving them the additional money to ensure they could deliver these important services to our children at the local level.

I ask you again, Minister, since municipalities are providing the services to children that you downloaded on to them, how much money will they get from the national children's agenda to support these critical services?

**Hon Mr Baird:** We'll be coming forward with an agenda on how to expend the national children's agenda money. I think what is exciting is that now you have all levels of government in Canada rowing together. Our support for children, our support for the early years, didn't begin on April 1 when the federal government joined us. I think it is a very positive symbol, though, when we have the federal government working with provinces right across the country to ensure we meet the provinces' local needs. When we come forward with the announcement, I think you'll see it's very much along the lines of the Mustard-McCain study that came out in 1999.

## CHILDRENS' SERVICES

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, how much money from the national children's agenda will you give to Ontario municipalities to support children's services in our communities?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** We're

## PETITIONS

### HEALTH CARE

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we believe that universally accessible, publicly funded health care is sacred and must be protected;



"Whereas Mike Harris intends on turning his back on working families and transforming our system into an American-style, two-tier system where only the rich will get quality care;

"Whereas we believe that Mike Harris has a secret agenda to promote two-tier health care in Ontario and now the secret is out;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Do not turn your back on Ontario's working families. Fight Mike Harris's agenda to destroy medicare and fight his plan to create a two-tier health care system."

I am in full support with those sentiments. I affix my signature to this petition.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has cut funding for regulated child care spaces in Ontario by 15% between 1995 and 1998;

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has yet to implement the recommendations of its own commissioned Early Years report by Dr Fraser Mustard to create a seamless, integrated early years education system;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million over the next five years from the federal government for early years development projects;

"Whereas the Conservative government lags behind other provinces in announcing its plans for the \$844 million in federal money for early years development; and

"Whereas other provinces are implementing innovative, affordable and accessible child care programs, such as Quebec's \$5-a-day child care program ... ;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Harris government immediately match and earmark a significant portion of the \$844 million from the federal government for expanded, regulated child care spaces and family resource programs."

This is signed by about 150 people from Windsor and I affix my signature to it.

### KARLA HOMOLKA

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads in part:

"Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka, resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

"Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to passes to leave prison with an escort; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that truly reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario will:

"Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

"Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

"Fight the federal government's plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

"Ensure that the Ontario government's sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible."

I'll affix my signature to this and send it up to the appropriate people.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Harris government's wholly owned Nanticoke generating station is North America's largest dirty coal-fired electricity producing plant and Ontario's largest producer of the chemicals and acid gases which contribute to deadly smog and acid rain; and

"Whereas the Nanticoke plant, which has more than doubled its dangerous emissions under the Harris government, is now the worst air polluter in all of Canada, spewing out over five million kilograms of toxic chemicals each year, including many cancer-causing chemicals and mercury, a potent and dangerous neurotoxin; and

1540

"Whereas at least 13 Ontario municipalities and seven northeastern US states have expressed concerns that Ontario Power Generation's proposed cleanup plan for Nanticoke is inadequate in protecting the air quality and health and safety of their residents; and

"Whereas the Ontario Medical Association has stated that 1,900 Ontarians die prematurely each year and we pay \$1 billion annually in health-related costs as a result of air pollution; and

"Whereas because the Harris government has now lifted the moratorium on the sale of coal-fired power plants and has set a date for deregulation of electricity, the operator of the Nanticoke plant will likely stoke up production to maximize profits which will only worsen the air quality in cities like Kitchener, Windsor, London, Niagara Falls and St Catharines;

"Be it resolved that the Mike Harris government immediately order that the Nanticoke generating station be converted from dirty coal to cleaner-burning natural gas."

I affix my signature. I'm in complete agreement with the sentiments of this petition.

### BRAIN TUMOURS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas early detection and treatment of brain tumours are vital to survive from this devastating disease;

"Whereas brain tumours strike people of all ages, from newborns to seniors, crossing all economic, social and ethnic boundaries and all walks of life;

"Whereas brain tumours are the most common cause of solid cancer in children; and

"Whereas brain tumour research, patient and family support services and awareness among the general public are essential to promote early detection and treatment of brain tumours.

"We, the undersigned, therefore respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario to pass a law proclaiming the month of October in each year as Brain Tumour Awareness Month."

### SAFE STREETS LEGISLATION

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas charities such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada, the Goodfellows, the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, firefighters and many others participate in fundraisers on streets, sidewalks and parking lots; and

"Whereas the Safe Streets Act, 1999, effectively bans these types of activities, putting police forces in the position of ignoring the law or hindering legitimate charities; and

"Whereas charitable organizations are dependent on these fundraisers to raise much-needed money and awareness;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We ask that the government of Ontario amend provincial legislation by passing the Charity Fundraising Activities Act, 2001, to allow charitable organizations to conduct fundraising campaigns on roadways, sidewalks and parking lots."

It's signed by individuals from Amherstburg to Ottawa and I support their petition.

### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the report of the McKendry commission, released by the Ontario Ministry of Health in December 1999, finds that Ontario is facing a shortage of over 1,000 physicians; and

"Whereas at least 286 international medical graduates in Ontario have successfully completed the Medical

Council of Canada evaluating exam, demonstrating competence in clinical knowledge; and

"Whereas the number of Ministry of Health funded post-graduate positions in 'pool B' (that is, international medical graduates) has been reduced from 289 to 81 since 1994; and

"Whereas the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine has indicated that they have the capacity to absorb an increase in the number of entry-level post-graduate positions, as long as sufficient resources are provided to support the increase; and

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly of Ontario unanimously passed private member's resolution 6 on November 25, 1999, which held that the government of Ontario should implement a plan to improve access to professions and trades for foreign-trained professionals.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care as follows:

"(a) to restore the number of Ministry of Health funded post-graduate positions for international medical graduates to at least 1994 levels;

"(b) to increase immediately the number of entry-level post-graduate training positions to the full capacity of the Ontario faculties of medicine;

"(c) to make the increased entry-level post-graduate positions directly available to international medical graduates who have successfully completed the requisite examinations;

"(d) to develop a plan to identify alternative funding mechanisms that allow more equitable access for international physicians"—it's very long, Speaker—"to the health care system in Ontario; and—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** It's very informative for you; you know that.

"(e) to appoint a committee, with representation from the international medical graduate community, to review and dismantle the barriers which have been established to prevent international physicians from gaining fair access to licensure and practice in Ontario."

Speaker, I'm going to allow John here to take this petition to the Clerk's office, and I affix my signature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further petitions.

### HORSE RIDING SAFETY

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas an increasing number of Ontarians are turning to horseback riding as a recreational activity; and

"Whereas many of these inexperienced riders are children; and

"Whereas currently there are no minimum safety standards regulating riding establishments; and

"Whereas coroners' inquests into horse riding fatalities from as long ago as 1977 have called for the mandatory use of riding helmets and boots; and



"Whereas an unacceptable number of preventable injuries and fatalities have occurred while horseback riding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass into law the private member's bill introduced by Tina Molinari, MPP for Thornhill, entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, in order to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used, and to amend the Highway Traffic Act and make it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to ride a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment."

I affix my name to the petition and I give it to Jason Apostolopoulos.

#### AUTISM SERVICES

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the citizens of Ontario, feel that the government is violating the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by discriminating against autistic spectrum disordered children in the delivery of necessary health care, this is a petition to offer the intensive behaviour treatment required to all autistic spectrum disordered children, not only to those most severely afflicted, and abolish waiting lists for essential health care to these children. The government of Ontario must intervene and provide all autistic spectrum disordered children treatment and relinquish the appropriate funding to deliver the necessary care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To offer the intensive behaviour treatment required to all autistic spectrum disordered children, not only to those most severely afflicted, and abolish waiting lists for essential health care to these children."

The government of Ontario must intervene and provide these children with the treatment that they deserve. I happily sign my name to this petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I have a petition with numerous signatures.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit material in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

Being in agreement, I attach my name to it.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor West):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we believe that universally accessible, publicly funded health care is sacred and must be protected;

"Whereas Mike Harris intends on turning his back on working families and transforming our system into an American-style, two-tier system, where only the rich will get quality health care;

"Whereas we believe that Mike Harris had a secret agenda to promote two-tier health care in Ontario and now the secret is out;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Do not turn your back on Ontario's working families.

"Fight Mike Harris's agenda to destroy medicare and fight his plan to create a two-tier health care system."

#### CELL PHONES

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's my pleasure to present a petition on behalf of my constituents.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death in North America; and

"Whereas studies conducted in the city of Toronto, the United States and Great Britain have reported that drivers using cell phones while operating a vehicle significantly increases the risk of collisions; and

1550

"Whereas people talking on cell phones while driving may cause a 34% higher risk of having an accident;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban the use of hand-held cell phones, portable computers and fax machines while operating a motor vehicle. We further respectfully request that Bill 102,"—which is my bill—"An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit the use of phones and other equipment while driving on a highway, be passed unanimously by all members of the provincial Parliament of Ontario."

I'm pleased to sign in support of this and to give Dave time.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** I have petitions to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we believe that universally accessible publicly funded health care is sacred and must be protected;

"Whereas Mike Harris intends on turning his back on the working families and transforming our system into an American style, two-tier system, where the rich will get quality health care;

"Whereas we believe that Mike Harris had a secret agenda to promote two-tier health care in Ontario and now the secret is out;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Do not turn your back on Ontario's working families. Fight Mike Harris's agenda to destroy medicare and fight his plan to create a two-tier health care system."

I affix my name to this and pass this on to Kristen.

#### ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

Bill 13, An Act to resolve labour disputes affecting the Toronto District School Board and the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board / Projet de loi 13, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail qui touchent les conseils scolaires de district appelés Toronto District School Board et Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board;

Bill 20, An Act to protect persons from liability in respect of voluntary emergency medical or first aid services / Projet de loi 20, Loi visant à exonérer les personnes de la responsabilité concernant des services médicaux ou des premiers soins fournis bénévolement en cas d'urgence.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 26, 2001, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** I'm happy to respond to the throne speech. The last time I rose in this House to respond to a throne speech—I guess it was, for many of us who were elected in 1999 for the first time, our so-called maiden speech. Now, as then, I want to spend my time talking about what matters to the people in the community I represent. I'm going to be sharing my time with the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot, the member for Essex and the member for York West.

Let's start with the 68% of the people who live in St Paul's who are renters. That's the second-highest proportion of renters in Ontario. What they're going through is nothing less than a nightmare, because there is certainly nothing in the throne speech for tenants—not in this throne speech, not in that throne speech, not in any throne speech from this government. Why? Because the Harris government brought in legislation that created a frankly bizarre legal scenario whereby an incentive was put into our laws to get tenants out of their apartments.

What I am I talking about? If you can evict someone from an apartment right now, you can rent that apartment for whatever you want if you're a landlord. That's called "vacancy decontrol." Does that mean there is an incentive for landlords to keep their present tenants? Of course not. The incentive is the reverse. Is this an academic issue or a real issue? I'll tell you it's a real issue in the riding, because with the eviction rates being what they are in St Paul's and with the vacancy rates being what they are in Toronto, less than 1%, people have nowhere to go.

The problem gets compounded where people are living in a building and are getting an above-guideline rent increase for something that I think most people, if they heard the circumstances, would say is just the cost of doing business if you own an apartment. You have to keep the carpet clean, you have to keep the carpet fresh, you have to keep paint on the walls, you have to make sure it's properly lit and so on. A lot of those basic matters, doing just the basic business of running an apartment, they now can claim on the backs of tenants, and of course they do. Therefore, the tenants' rents are going up 8%, 9% or 10%. For somebody who is on a fixed income in particular, this is an intolerable situation.

Ida Mandel is somebody who lives in the riding of St Paul's, and she wanted me to mention her name and tell her story. She's a senior. She's on a fixed income. She has received her third above-guideline increase in the last three years. Her rent keeps on going up and up and up, but of course, because she's on her fixed income, this is like the most retrograde, regressive tax upon her that you could ever imagine. In her case, the Harris government has put her in a situation whereby she has to make a choice: is she going to have to cut down on the amount of money that she spends on groceries, or is she going to have to go and find a cheaper apartment? A cheaper apartment, meanwhile, good luck. It's like finding cheap playoff tickets for the Leafs games. There are none in the city of Toronto right now. Why? Because the vacancy rate is less than 1%.

If the goal of the Tenant Protection Act—and I don't believe that it was, but even giving someone the benefit of the doubt—was in some way to address the fair market, we don't have a level playing field. We don't have a fair market in the city of Toronto, and as a result, the large majority of the people of St Paul's are paying the price.

Property taxes: homeowners in St Paul's have been absolutely nailed with the prospect of property tax



increases. There are two problems. One is the process. As a result of the pennies that are invested in the current assessment system, more often than not citizens have to basically transform themselves into high-priced litigators in order to fight unfair property assessments. That's number one. Number two, of course, is that they are bearing the burden of the downloading exercise which, contrary to the recommendation of the Who Does What panel, ended up putting the burden not through a progressive income tax system, but through a regressive property tax system. Again, you talk about somebody on a fixed income who happened to buy their house in a neighbourhood which has happened to get hot, and they are suddenly faced with an unrealized capital gains tax. The can't afford to move, they can't afford to get rid of it, but they also can't afford to pay their property taxes.

I and the councillors in St Paul's, Joe Mihevc on the west and Michael Walker on the east, spent a good deal of time meeting with many folks in St Paul's who wanted to come out and talk about the issue, helping them fight the assessment and letting them know what we're doing both in Queen's Park and in city hall on their behalf.

People in St Paul's are calling about the Oak Ridges moraine and also about the local green space and the lack thereof in the riding of St Paul's. It's unfortunate, but the western part of the riding actually has one of the lowest percentages of green space in the entire province. It's increasingly becoming a concrete jungle. I can tell you that our commitment to saving and not paving the Oak Ridges moraine is an indicator of our commitment to green space in the riding. A lot of people in midtown Toronto, quite rightly, care about the issue. Fine, it's not happening in their backyard, but of course they're downriver from the effects of the adverse policies of this government with respect to the Oak Ridges moraine.

ODSP, social assistance payments: again, these people are just the expendables in the Common Sense Revolution.

New Canadians: Dr Ali, a representative of the Somali community, came in to meet with me to tell me about what we all know is the case in this province. People are coming from around the world. They are bringing their expertise. They could address and assist in the labour shortages that we have with respect to doctor and nurse shortages, with respect to teacher shortages, engineers, high-tech people, and they're being told either by the self-regulating body or by the province, "You've got to start all over again," as if their experience is worthless. I know the commitment of Dalton McGuinty and our proposal for access to the professions is one that they were grateful for, but at the same time they want the government to do something about this in the midst of this labour shortage that's affecting our province.

Education: I don't need to tell anybody in this room about the turmoil that's affecting communities all across the province, as of course we saw with the closing of our schools. The e-mails and the telephone calls that I got on this, like so many members in this House, I know, were heartbreaking: kids calling a couple of weeks ago to say

that their school stunk, that it was infested with rats and mice, that there was garbage everywhere. Suddenly we had a tragic metaphor, but it was a literal one as well, that represented our education system at present.

1600

I know that Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals will continue to put forward positive proposals of progress and peace plans so that we serve the people we're supposed to serve in our public education system: the schools.

Annie Kidder, a spokesperson for People for Education at the Niagara conference hosted by Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals a few weekends ago, said that often we forget what the purpose of public education is. When you look at some of the proposals put forth by this government, you would think that they just, "Oh, here is an idea. Let's just drop this bomb in the middle of public education." Instead, Annie Kidder said, "I think that everything that drives public education ought to be asking the question, 'Are we assisting students in becoming better citizens who can better participate in our democracy?'" Isn't that the purpose of public education, doesn't that make sense, instead of the focus on creating a crisis, sustaining and maintaining a crisis? That's the approach of this government. We're trying to put forward positive proposals, and that's frankly what the people of Ontario want.

Lastly, we're looking forward, in fact, to a question period tomorrow because it is a unique and wonderful event. I'd like to respond to something that the Premier said in the media. He said that he doesn't want to show up and answer opposition politicians' questions. Why? He said because, in fact, the questions from the folks at the doughnut shops are more relevant. I'd say this to him: unless you want to reform our parliamentary system, it's the one in which we have to operate. In our parliamentary system we have an official opposition. It's the loyal opposition. It is our job, just as it's the government's job, supposedly, to govern, although this government denies that it is the government, it is the opposition's job to hold their feet to the fire. It's our job here to represent the folks in the doughnut shops. We were elected to do that. The Premier may try to address this issue with rhetoric but the truth is that the people of Ontario expect him to be held accountable by the means we have in our present system, and that is, yes, through the media, but in particular in question period in the Ontario Legislature. I'm proud to be here and ask questions, and I wish the Premier was proud enough to be here to provide some answers.

Mr Speaker, I'll defer now to the members for Eglinton-Lawrence, Ancaster-Dundas, Essex and York West.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott):** I caution the member for St Paul's not to refer to any member's absence.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** I am honoured to follow my colleague from St Paul's and the great work he's done in bringing fresh, energizing ideas to Ontario

in the last while with his vigour and search for better solutions. Just like the member for St Paul's, I want to comment on a few things that were in and not in the throne speech.

I would say first of all that I know in the throne speech there was a complaint about excessive spending in health care. I just wanted perhaps to remind the government that one of the reasons there is maybe more spending than there should have been is that this government has mismanaged the health care portfolio.

I'll give you an example in my own riding. Remember three or four years ago we had this vaunted, highly publicized Mike Harris hospital restructuring commission that went across the province closing hospitals, closing emergencies, and under the guidance of the great guru Duncan Sinclair there, they said they had all the answers then. It seems they don't have the answers, because the hospitals are in a mess, the emergencies are lined up, and health care is in peril not because they're not spending enough but because they're not spending wisely or investing wisely and because they took that reckless approach of closing hospitals before they had an alternative in place.

In my own riding we had a great hospital on Keele Street in west Toronto called Northwestern hospital, built by people's donations, door to door, in the 1950s. Mike Harris's restructuring commission closed that hospital and said that they were going to invest in a hospital up the street where they had very close Tory ties: you know, Mark Rochon; President Devlin of the Tory party is up there. They said, "We're going to open up Humber." You can't get to Humber by bus. It's a small, five-acre parcel. They said, "No, we're going to invest in the five-acre hospital site," and the community said, "You're crazy. That site you have to bulldoze homes to build parking lots. It's going to cost you a fortune." No, the Mike Harris closing commission with Duncan Sinclair went ahead and closed Northwestern, which was a new hospital—it's still empty, not being used—while they spent tens of millions trying to figure out how this Humber hospital is going to work.

Lo and behold, two months ago the president of the Tory party of Ontario said, "Listen, I want to close all the hospitals and build a mega-hospital at Downsview air force base." We told them, "This is what we told you in the first place, that your plan wasn't going to work." Now he's going to close more emergencies, he's going to basically spend more money and we still have no adequate emergencies in the west end of Toronto, we still have second-rate hospitals. It's not because of the doctors, it's not because of the staff or the nurses; it's because this government has been reckless, tinkering and disinterested in doing what's right. They are more interested in building these monuments to their friends who are benefiting from building these hospital expansions rather than providing orderlies, nurses and doctors. That's all I'll say about health care.

In terms of education, in my riding of Eglinton-Lawrence I have I think some of the finest elementary

and high schools in all of Canada, if not in North America. People from all over Canada will come and live in my riding because they want to go to John Ross Robertson, they want to go to Allenby school, they want to go to John Wanless, they want to go to Marshall McLuhan high school, they want to go to Lawrence Park. These are some of the finest publicly funded elementary and high schools in all of North America, paid for by property taxes. People will have a \$1-million home and send their kids to John Wanless, or they'll have children living in an apartment and they'll send their kids to John Wanless. It's an excellent neighbourhood environment. Children and their families walk to school—superb.

This government continues to disrupt public education in the city of Toronto by its cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach, which doesn't work. They try to micro-manage education from Queen's Park in the backrooms. It doesn't work. So what was once, as I say, one of the best public school systems in North America this government has attacked non-stop for five years. They are basically being told by my constituents, "Leave us alone." You collect property tax dollars in Toronto for education. Keep that property tax dollar in the Toronto school. The schools are quite all right only if this government stops playing political war games with public education, which it continues to do.

I also want to talk about another interesting part of the throne speech. There was a reference to the new buzzword, the new pseudo solution to stopping sprawl. It's the new buzzword copied from New Jersey called "Smart Growth." Obviously it sounds good. The problem is the Premier doesn't understand what it means nor do his ministers, because every time they talk about this pseudo Smart Growth, they talk about highways, "We're going to put toll roads with more highways." Smart Growth has got nothing to do with highways. It's almost like you don't mention the two together, and if you do you don't know what you're talking about, but every time they mention Smart Growth they mention highways.

If you're going to have Smart Growth in this province, you have to rely on environmentally, ecologically sustainable planning practices and transportation practices. As you know, this government is the only jurisdiction—and the member from Ancaster will tell you—in the western world that doesn't fund public transit. Yet it says it is going to now reinvent growth. How can you do it if you don't fund the GO system, you don't fund public transit? You can't have sustainable growth without investment in public transit, and that's what this government doesn't understand and that's why this government will do nothing but keep feeding the giant beast called "Tory sprawl." You can see sprawl: cookie-cutter, ugly garage homes all over southern Ontario that this government promotes and sells. It loves these garage homes everywhere on farmland.

Mr Speaker, you live on some of the best farmland, in Wellington, in this province. This government is chewing it up, spitting it up, hating it. In fact as we speak, right now near the Duffins Creek we have some of the best



farmland in Canada near the Rouge Valley. It's a connector between the moraine and Lake Ontario. This government's Ontario Realty Corp is selling off this A1 farmland, environmentally sustainable land, to developers. That's government-owned taxpayer land it is selling as it purports to be in favour of pseudo Smart Growth. How can you be in favour of sustainable planning when you sell off farmland and watersheds on the banks of Duffins Creek? They're doing that right now by order of this government. That is not smart growth, that is stupid sprawl, and this government is the best government we ever had in promoting and feeding that beast called "sprawl."

1610

In fact, if you go to the corner of Weston Road and Highway 7, there's a big monument, a church. It's like a big, giant hubcap, where they come and worship sprawl. You should go and see it. They call it a theatre of some sort. But they do nothing but feed sprawl, promote it, pollute our environment, contaminate our water table. This government doesn't understand what sustainable, lasting, beautiful, natural ecological growth is.

Perhaps we should encourage the Premier to read this book. The book is by someone who was at the Niagara conference that my colleague from St Paul's had so much foresight in bringing. The name is James Howard Kunstler. Remember that name: James Howard Kunstler. He is basically telling us we had better wake up or we're going to destroy one of the most beautiful parts of this country and this province. Here's what Kunstler said:

"We will have to downscale our gigantic enterprise and institutions—corporations, governments, banks, schools, hospitals, markets, farms—and learn to live locally, hence responsibly. We will have to drive less," God forbid, "and create decent public transportation that people want to use. We will have to produce less garbage ... and consume less fossil fuel. We will have to reacquire the lost art of civic planning and redesign our rules for building. If we can do these things, we may be able to recreate a nation of places worth caring about, places of enduring quality and admirable character."

As you know, that doesn't happen in rural Ontario, thank God, but we have these civic buildings of great stature. Main Street Ontario is beautiful. But what we are doing is we are now replacing it with the Mike Harris agenda of Wal-Mart architecture. Costco, Wal-Mart, Canadian Tire—they're great places, but they're ugly. They're concrete boxes with no windows. Give me Main Street in Port Perry; give me Main Street in Tweed. Forget these slums that basically pay homage to the automobile. The automobile is a great invention, but we shouldn't have to get down on all fours and beg the automobile to save us. What can save us is our commitment to things that are natural and lasting.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I just want to comment on one of the points made by the member from St Paul's, which I thought was actually an interesting one. He said he had heard the Premier comment in

an interview he had done earlier this week in response to questions of why Premier Mike Harris does not want to show up at question period and we don't see him in the House any more. Mr Harris's answer was, "Well, it's more interesting answering questions from people in the coffee shops than the people in the Legislature."

I think that is really disturbing, because it tells me to a certain extent that the Premier doesn't hold this House in any kind of respect. I would say if that's the case, I want to join that club, because I don't believe that this Legislature, based on a system that was designed over 300 years ago, called "first past the post," really serves constituents or the Premier, for that matter, or members of the opposition. I would argue you have tyranny of the majority, a party that was elected with 42% of the vote, in this case, that has more than 50% of the seats and is able to do what they damned well please. Prior to that you had Bob Rae, my government, that was elected with 38% of the vote, who had a majority in the House as well. I say that's not good for democracy.

If the Premier thinks it's not a good idea to come to the House because he doesn't like the way this House operates because of our antiquated rules developed 300 years ago, I want to applaud that—not that he's not here, but maybe I'm hearing that the Premier would be willing to make changes to how this Legislature works. Maybe we could modernize our democracy in order to take a look at what has been done in other countries, for example Germany, where they developed a good hybrid system of proportional representation, which still allows you to elect members directly through your ridings as we do now, so that at the end of the day if you have 42% of the votes in a general election, you would end up with only 42% of the seats. That way, maybe people would be more interested in what happens in this place.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Timmins-James Bay not to make reference to the absence of any member of this House.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The Premier comments about how he does not want to be here; therefore, I'm commenting on a comment that he made, which is, if he holds this House in contempt—

**The Speaker:** That's not a point of order.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I was watching with some interest the comments made by the member for Eglinton-Lawrence. I felt some harmony in what he was saying, specifically when he mentioned my riding of Durham. It always touches a tender spot with me. He specifically mentioned Port Perry and the streetscape and the beautiful kind of rural landscape, if you will, but also a thriving community of people, which, by the way, doesn't have all of the services of the city of Toronto, which he represents. But that's exactly where we've been.

He mentioned the author Mr Kunstler and his profound statements about no more economy, basically. He was talking about downsizing everything to a kind of home-based business scenario. That brings to bear the question of, if we need all these public transit systems,

where exactly will they be going? If we're going to downsize everything so that there is no economy, basically we won't need the public transit infrastructure that he's referring to.

But I think if he wants to make sure that I'm clearly on the record of defending many of the same things I think our government is defending with this whole theory or theme of smart growth, it is to protect those areas. If you want to look at the Living Legacy that Minister Snobelen has brought in, the greatest number of reserves and preserves of parkland and other important features of this province that are pristine and clean, that's exactly what we're doing. In fact the sprawl that occurred, I think from the 1980s, the big-box concept that he was so critical of, is symptomatic of just no plan.

So if you pay close attention, smart growth does address, I think in harmony, many of the things you want, but it does talk about growth. What we had for 10 years was no growth, no investment. Clearly, the federal government has lost its way; probably you're imitating them.

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I'm very pleased to be able to respond to my colleagues the member for St Paul's and the member for Eglinton-Lawrence. I think both brought out some very salient points that relate to the people they represent. I think they very ably explained their understanding of the problems that were not addressed in the throne speech.

With regard to comments made by the member for St Paul's, who made reference to an individual in his riding, since I've had this role as member, I am part-time resident in a building not so very far from here. I meet a number of the residents rather regularly on my floor. There's one very nice young man; his name is Cal. One day we were chatting and he asked what I did. I explained I was a member of provincial Parliament. The first thing that came to his mind that he thought he needed to impress upon me was the need for rent control.

This is a young man who would say to me that there are people in our building where we live who are on fixed incomes, who have endured above-the-line rent increases. They're at the point now where many of the residents who lived in our building have had to leave. This is a community. This is where people look out for each other. They have been forced to leave, not because they want to, but because they can no longer afford the rent in that building. They're forced to consider accommodation that perhaps is less secure, less ideally located for them.

Cal said to me, "Would you please see if you could tell Mike Harris, have him understand, that we need more concern and control for people in their situation so that people who have come to be comfortable in a community won't be forced to look for accommodation elsewhere because they are on a fixed income?"

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** I'd like to comment on some of the remarks made by the member for Eglinton-Lawrence. He spoke specifically about several elementary schools. One of them which

sparked my interest was John Ross Robertson public school. It's a great school. I went to that school from kindergarten to grade 8.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** It's never been the same.

1620

**Mr Tilson:** Well, I can tell you that I hope my friend from Eglinton-Lawrence is looking after the riding, because a number of great provincial and federal politicians have represented that riding. Len Reilly represented this area from—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Tilson:** He was a Tory, to the member for St Catharines. Mitchell Sharp represented that riding, and Donald Fleming and a whole slew of others I'm sure he's aware of.

My only concern about some of his comments was suggesting that the area has better education, and I'm sure that wasn't his intent. But what we've tried to do on this side is to say that whether you go to John Ross Robertson in the member's riding or whether you go to Princess Elizabeth, an elementary school in my riding of Orangeville, the education should be the same and the funding should be the same and the program should be the same.

**Mr Bradley:** That's not what the Fraser Institute says.

**Mr Tilson:** Well, I say they are the same. We intend to continue with that philosophy so that education, no matter what part of this great province you're in, will be identical and you will have that equal quality education.

I congratulate the member for speaking about my former alma mater. I hadn't thought of it for a long time. I spent many great years in that elementary school and it helped shape my childhood. I'm pleased to be here.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Eglinton-Lawrence has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Colle:** I'm certainly heartened by the intelligent comments of my colleague from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey. I think he really added to the debate; the member from Durham also, and my colleague from beautiful Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. The member from James Bay—I'm not sure what he was referring to.

I just want to say that the challenge for us at Queen's Park is not to try and reinvent and make all schools in this province fit a cookie-cutter. That's what I'm worried about. I don't like schools micromanaged by backroom people at Queen's Park. That tendency is really dangerous.

I just want to tell the member from Durham that if you use our resources intelligently, you will have more long-term sustainable growth. If you waste and squander resources like water and farmland you won't have that long-term growth and prosperity. That's why I'm saying be very careful that you use our limited resources properly.

We have rail lines that go throughout the GTA that are sitting there empty. There's a wonderful rail line that goes up to Goodwood—you know, beautiful little



Goodwood—that's empty. Why not run a train all day from Goodwood so people don't have to pack the 403? Why not have a train instead of another highway in the Niagara Peninsula that goes through farmland and cuts out all those beautiful tender fruit crops? Why not have a train go from downtown Toronto to Niagara Falls all day?

Use highways, but invest wisely in public transportation. If you look at Rome, Paris, London, Chicago, Washington, DC, that's what they're doing. We're going to back to the Neanderthal age by just paving everything black. It's not smart to pave farmland and riverbanks. We have to start using our intelligence to save our resources.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** It is my privilege to speak on the throne speech. I just want to make one comment. After listening to a couple of comments from the opposition today, I want to give them a touch of advice. I know they won't take it, but I would suggest they quit thinking in the past. It's great to look back, but for goodness' sake, don't go back, I would caution you.

It's interesting, the comment that governments squander. When the Liberals were in power, they had the largest increase in revenue in their last year and the greatest increase in welfare. If you're talking about accountability, let me give you a bit of a lecture, for lack of a better word, on accountability.

One of the things about the throne speech, in my mind, was that it set a precedent this year. Not only was it short, not only was it concise, but it also came to the point, and the point was that we must look to the future. I just made that comment a minute ago about looking back. It's great to look back, but you can't go back. You've got to think about the future.

One of the problems over the many years has been that past governments have looked at the past and haven't planned for the future. Politicians at all levels have a tendency to look within the box or within the time for which they are elected. They don't look beyond.

This throne speech, the 21 steps into the 21st century, looks at how we want Ontario and Ontarians to be in the 21st century. I'm not talking two or three years out; I'm talking 10, 15 or 20 years down the road. As I said, many past governments and politicians of the day—and there are those across the way who think the same thing now, look with no direction, make promises that are never, ever kept. They believe responsibility is to throw money at a problem or a concern, but you know and I know that when the money is all spent, the problems and concerns are still there, still exist.

Unfortunately, the word "accountability" is often used in this House but is not always practised. As well, some people really don't know what the word means. As I said, to their mind—and we've heard it this afternoon—it's "More money, more money, more money." That is not accountability, nor is it going to solve the problem.

This was very evident when the Mike Harris government took over back in 1995. The province was very close to bankruptcy. There wasn't any accountability and

hadn't been for a good number of years previously. We were in a situation where we had to look at accountability for our government because it hadn't been practised for a number of years.

Spending by the previous two governments had been totally out of control for a number of years. Unemployment was skyrocketing at that time; welfare was running rampant; environmental concerns were basically non-existent; new technologies like cath labs, MRIs and dialysis expansion basically were dreams.

In my own municipality they had been trying to get a cath lab for about 12 years, they had been trying to get an MRI for about 10 years, trying to get a dialysis unit for 15 years, and trying to deliver health care out of a building built in 1947.

When our government came to power, we started to be accountable. We started to look at savings within the government first, because you must look internally before you look externally, and things started to happen. Cardiac care was expanded. In my municipality we now have a cath lab, thanks to many people who got behind it and a government that saw the need. We will be opening an MRI in about another month. We have a dialysis unit, with another one coming onside again within the next couple of months. We found the necessary dollars within the system because of accountability on the part of our government.

One of the concerns I have is that there still seems to be a perception across the way that you solve your problem with a whole bunch of money. But the philosophy they have is not accountability. It is, "Throw money at it."

Accountability has many facets. As I listen to them over there, sometimes some of the facts they are giving are not always necessarily correct. That is a degree of accountability, and I have concerns with that because the public listens to this. There are days I wonder why they do, but they do. They like to see what goes on, and I can tell you that some of them are not very appreciative of the type of conduct that all of us in this House engage in. That is one degree of accountability, again: the way we conduct ourselves in this House, accountable to those people who are watching.

1630

Our government has restructured big time since we took over in 1995. Why? Because, as I said, spending was totally out of control, unemployment was rising drastically, and welfare and social assistance were rising drastically. We had to start to get things under control. We had to start to be accountable to the people, because it is the taxpayers' money. It isn't mine, it isn't yours; it's the taxpayers' money that we are spending up here. I suggest to you that we should be somewhat accountable, and more accountable. When we formed the government, we looked within all of the ministries, and let me assure you we still have a long ways to go.

I can remember restructuring my own business, and we did it many, many times over a period of about 30 years. We would have a team meeting of the staff,

saying, "Hey, if we do this we're going to save a bunch of money. If we do the other thing, we will be more accountable. We'll be able to give better customer service." After we had that meeting—and some went on for half an hour; other ones went on for two or three or four hours—the final comment was, "Tomorrow morning we'd better start re-looking at it and looking at ways to achieve the accountability, to achieve the savings and to make sure that what we are delivering is the best possible product." Again, as I said, look inside before you look outside.

A year ago or less, when our government passed the balanced budget act, what it said was that we will be responsible, we will be accountable, something that had never, ever been done in this House before. Governments can no longer run deficits: kind of a unique way to do it. You try to do it in your business and you try to do it in your home. Why then would we not do it in government? Again, we are the people who spend the people's money and create the programs we have to offer.

As we have said, the eighth step that was created in the throne speech was holding the broad public sector accountable to the taxpayers. As step eight of this plan, our government will introduce sweeping reforms to ensure that all public sector institutions are accountable to the citizens of this province. Certainly there are proposed amendments to the Audit Act which would empower the Provincial Auditor to ensure that institutions funded by Ontario taxpayers use the money prudently, effectively, as intended, and become as efficient and accountable as possible. This is a policy in many businesses in this province. It's a policy we try to achieve in our own home budgets. Granted, we don't always do it, but we try. Sometimes there are more things you need than there is money to go around, but we try to do it. Why then would we not do it in government, and why would other governments in the past not have done the same thing?

One of the interesting things is that we're going to introduce legislation to cancel the OHIP billing numbers of providers convicted of health fraud. It will be introduced shortly. Why would we not do that? If there is fraud in the system, then what it does is take the money away from those people who really need it. It doesn't matter whether it's in health care or whether it's in social assistance or whatever. If money is taken out of a system and used fraudulently, then I suggest we have to introduce legislation and changes that will make that not happen.

Running deficits is not sustainable, and if you believe that then I feel very sorry for you, because they are not sustainable and I believe they are not acceptable. Your government, your municipalities and school boards are now prohibited from running deficits. The budget will introduce measures that will require the entire public sector, including hospitals, to act in a fiscally responsible manner.

It was interesting. I was talking to the CEO or the administrator of our local hospital, who is extremely

supportive of this type of legislation, the reason being that it means that those that are accountable, those that are running good, effective and efficient operations, should be complimented. They are the ones that should be given the extra dollars that may be necessary. One of the problems we have had over the past many years is various groups who spend without some degree of accountability, and what do they do? They run off to the government and say, "Oh, I've a deficit. I need more money." In the past it's been, "Throw the money to them," but that doesn't create any type of accountability whatsoever. I believe, as the gentleman who is the head of our local hospital suggests, that if you are spending wisely, things will move along well.

The taxpayers are concerned. In my own riding, I have approximately 50 requests that I have passed on for an audit of a certain organization that we fund. People are concerned that these organizations that we fund are not to some degree spending wisely, and I can tell you this: I believe we're not going far enough. I believe we should be auditing externally every organization that we fund. We should be doing that, absolutely. The Provincial Auditor does it to us and publicizes what we're doing wrong, and indeed should. If we are not doing something right, if we are being unaccountable in a certain area, why in the name of goodness can the taxpayer not know? But over the years it seems, "Oh, let's hide it. Let's throw some more money at it. Let's put it under the bed and everybody is just going to be happy."

I know that's the way the opposition and the third party think. I know that. I can appreciate that's the way you think. You don't want accountability. I said accountability means certain things. Where was the accountability last Friday from the third party to the students, to the teachers, to the parents, to the grandparents, to all of the people to make sure that those students were going to get their year? Where was the accountability in that? I'm sorry. There was no accountability. I've made comments about accountability being in many forms. One happened to be a very poor example of it last Friday. I couldn't believe it, and as I said very publicly, I was actually ashamed to be in this House last Friday because of some of the comments that were made.

#### 1640

Sustained growth: that's accountability. Honouring your pledge, honouring a promise: that's accountability. A new business impact test, which is what's going to happen through the Red Tape Commission, is accountability. As I said, there's no such thing as government money; it's your money. It's your money, people of this province.

The government will sell businesses it should not operate and assets it should not own—that is accountability—and have sunset clauses to make sure you look at things, to make sure they're working well. I know the opposition wants us to be in absolutely everything, because they don't believe the private sector should do anything. Anybody who goes private or any private person, they tell you, is wrong. They're the bad guys.



They're the guys who don't know nothing. They've all got to be in the public sector. You say it every time you stand up.

The 21st century: businesses can set up shop anywhere fairly quickly. That, ladies and gentlemen, is accountability, very much accountability.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that we all use this word "accountability" and many do not practise it. We get out and go through the rhetoric, "Everybody's wrong but me." I'm a great believer that if you're going to point the finger, for goodness' sakes, look in the mirror while you're doing it. If you're going to be factual in this House, for goodness' sakes, be factual, don't twist things around that sometimes are not.

I am very proud to have stood today and talked about the throne speech, a throne speech that will lead us into the future, a throne speech that has 21 steps, a direction, a plan. I know it's a surprise for the opposition to have an idea, but we have ideas. We move forward—

**Mr O'Toole:** No vision, none at all.

**Mr Stewart:** That's right, they have no ideas at all.

It was interesting to listen to what the member from Eglinton-Lawrence talked about. I guess I'll go out and I'll untie my horse out the back and get on and ride home, or I'll get in the buggy. You want to go back, I'm sorry, I know you do, but you didn't do it very well in the past. I suggest to you that with the type of lack of accountability, with the type of no direction, with the type of leadership, I really hope the opposition does not form the government for a good long time, because if they do, our future is in jeopardy because they can't think out of the box. They can't think about what this great province needs to look like. We've got to prepare now for what we want 10 or 15 years down the way.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions?

**Mr Bradley:** I'm glad the member brought up the issue of accountability. I want to commend him for that because I was thinking of some areas where accountability would be very useful.

There was an agreement signed with a private sector firm to run a highway called Highway 407. That particular deal, which costs the users of that highway an awful lot of money all the time, is a rather interesting deal, whether one agrees or disagrees with it. I'm very apprehensive about the details of that and the concept of the fact of the private sector owning and operating a highway of that kind, but be that as it may, the problem is that even under the freedom of information act of the province of Ontario, we cannot get that information.

It would be useful for us to have that so that the government could be accountable. If we had all the facts on the table, and the public were able to assess those facts, the public could then make an informed judgment as to whether that was a good deal or not. It's not simply what's in the government's talking notes, but whether that's a good deal objectively agreed to.

A second would be government advertising. We have \$234 million now of government advertising. I think

most people who are objective would agree, even some government members, that the kind of advertising we're getting is clearly of a partisan kind, that it's not independent, that it's not information that is provided; it is self-serving, blatantly government advertising.

Another area I would like him to look at is the cabinet office. The member for Sarnia-Lambton mentioned there had been a huge increase in the cost of the cabinet office this particular year. It would be good to have accountability for that cabinet office and the huge raises that were given to ministers' political staff, two years ago, of 30%.

The last is the radiation treatment to be available at Sunnybrook hospital. I would like to see the details of that. I think the government should be accountable and then the public could make the appropriate judgment.

**Mr Bisson:** I find it interesting that a government member would stand in the House and say that we should never look at what happened in the past, that we should not look at the past to learn what we can learn, that we should only look at the future.

I remind the government member that we learn a lot by our past; we learn how to do things well and we learn how to do things better. That's how progress moves along. I thought that was an amazing comment.

He tries to leave us in the House and those watching back home with the impression that whatever was run by the public sector, not directly by a ministry but by some agency such as a rape crisis centre, maybe a children's aid centre, whatever it might be, public housing, you name it, was run badly and that we need to have this really good type of auditing brought in because God knows how they spend their money; they just keep on spending and they come back to government.

It flies in the face of reality. The organizations out there like the children's aid society, yes, like women's crisis centres and others, have been running quite effectively, quite efficiently, and do you know what? it's now the law that they need to be audited by an outside firm.

The member across the way tries to make it look as if these people are spending money like drunken sailors when it's not the case, and then says they're not accountable because we need to have them audited in some way, something that already happens.

I wish the member would just check his facts a little bit better before he starts to speak.

Then on the question of deficits, I think his whole idea is a great one. I think he's right that governments should not run deficits, and therefore I think we should get rid of every credit card every consumer has in Ontario, that we should outlaw the loaning of money for mortgages, cars and everything else, that we should not allow any lending to the private sector, because those are all deficits and we know how well our economy would work if people didn't have credit. Imagine that.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I was certainly very entertained and really enjoyed the presentation made by the member from Peterborough. As usual, he put forth his full effort and gave everything to that presentation.

He really zeroed in on accountability and pointed out to both opposition parties their errors in accountability in the past. I thought he did extremely well in talking about how they've thrown money at things in the past, the old spend, tax and borrow philosophy, particularly of the Liberals, and the NDP was really the borrower and built up the horrendous debt in this province.

It is interesting that he pointed out the three themes that were in that throne speech, along with the 21 steps, the three themes being growth, fiscal responsibility and accountability. It seems to grate on the opposition tremendously when we talk about accountability, because obviously for the 10 lost years in Ontario that was what was indeed lacking here—accountability.

He made reference to conduct here in the Legislature, and I too have become disappointed over the last few years with the style that the opposition uses. They do not come up with alternative ideas, but rather are obstructionist. They really obstruct every move the government tries to make, but don't come forward with good ideas. That's really what the opposition is there for.

Also the member from Peterborough talked about it being the taxpayers' money. When you listen to the opposition, you'd think it was their money or government's money. They really lose track of where those dollars come from.

He talked about running deficits and their not being sustainable. I couldn't have said it better myself: the lack of sustainability, and we saw that going on for so many years in the province of Ontario. I thank the member for Peterborough for just a great speech.

**The Acting Speaker:** Time has expired. Comments and questions.

1650

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** Aristotle is busy today, so I won't—I'd love to be able to quote the Premier, but he of course, speaking of accountability, is here so seldom, it's difficult to know what he's thinking.

**The Acting Speaker:** We don't allow you to do anything indirectly that you can't do directly.

**Mr McMeekin:** Thanks, Mr Speaker. I want to say that, in fairness, it took the Premier—

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You know that the Speaker took a very defined position on members mentioning whether or not another member was present or wasn't present. We continue to see the Liberal official opposition drag this up time and time again. Each time it is dragged up by this member, that member, this member, that member, the Speaker warns those particular members.

I suspect, unless the House considers the option of saying to the opposition or any member of this Legislature that the next time it's done, they'll be named, it will not stop.

**Mr Bradley:** Are you telling the Speaker how to do the job?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I've noticed this three or four times this afternoon, as I sit here quietly listening to this debate

and wanting members to get on with the debate, rather than this childishness. I just wanted to express that particular opinion. I hope that the Chair will take it under consideration.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point of order. I will take that into consideration.

**Mr Bisson:** On two points of order, Mr Speaker: One is, I would ask for unanimous consent in order to give the member back his time so he can finish his spot that he had. I would ask for unanimous consent first.

**Interjections:** No.

**The Acting Speaker:** There is not consent.

**Mr Bisson:** You didn't even ask for it, Bert.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there consent to restore the lost time? No.

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: I think you made a good ruling and I appreciated very much that you took into consideration the rules of this House.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You know I rose on two points of order. I did the first one. The second one—

**The Acting Speaker:** I just wanted to clear up that I don't take numerous points of order in rotation. I give attention to people who stand up when they want something. So after you had your first point of order, there was another member who came in order before you. If you have another point of order, I'll hear it now.

I would like to hear the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot for about a minute and 30 seconds, please.

**Mr McMeekin:** Mr Speaker, thank you for that. I should say at the outset that when I heard that the recall of the Legislative Assembly would be delayed a month, I actually wrote in my biweekly column, suggesting that was probably good, because I took the Premier at his word that the government would be about the process of identifying a vision for Ontario and attempting to articulate that vision. I said in my column that there was a sense of excitement that was permeating the entire province. We were waiting in breathless anticipation for the chance to come back and to be about the task that we were elected to be about.

Little did I know, though, that we would come back to a situation where we would have 21 excuses offered as to why the students didn't do their homework in the four months that they had off. It's rather disappointing, and I can tell you that a number of my constituents in Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot understand accountability. They understand very much that this is the people's house and that the people's Premier should be here answering the questions of those who were duly elected to represent their interests throughout Ontario. So the term "accountability" coming for the opposite side of the House is somewhat shallow in that context.

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to be clear. I want to be very clear about the ruling of the Chair, and that is that you don't do something indirectly that you don't do



directly. In that, I'm willing to accept your withdrawal of the last remark.

**Mr McMeekin:** Which remark was that, Mr Speaker? Mr Speaker, if I've offended anybody or touched a sensitive nerve, I certainly wasn't—

**The Acting Speaker:** No, I'm sorry. I don't want it conditional. Either you withdraw it or you don't.

**Mr McMeekin:** I'll withdraw whatever anyone found offensive, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Peterborough. Two minutes for your response.

**Mr Stewart:** You know, I kind of chuckle to myself when I talked about accountability for 20 minutes over here, and people get up and try and circumvent the rules in this House. I suggest that they maybe get the dictionary out, look at what the word "accountability" is and start to practice it a little bit more.

I made the comment that I believe that anybody that we supply money to or give money to or grant money to should be accountable—and many of them are—and also should be audited. It's much the same as teacher testing. Teacher testing is not to point the finger, it's not to criticize, it's not to suggest that they're doing wrong. Just maybe we could help them. Just maybe we could help them become—by knowing what the problems might be, maybe then we could assist them in having a new direction, having a new program or indeed having a plan. They don't like testing. Why wouldn't you? You want to know whether people are being taught well, whether the quality of education's good.

When you talk about accountability, should we not make sure that people are spending the money wisely? And for goodness' sake, if we can assist them, why would we not? If people are scared of it, then I suggest to you they're the ones that we should be looking at very carefully, because most of them—and I'm quite sure many of them out there—do the job well, they're efficient, they're effective, they do it extremely well. But just maybe within that we could also assist them a little bit extra.

Again, I listened to the opposition criticize the private sector—

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Stewart:**—and it happens forever. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate. The Chair recognizes the member for York West.

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** There's still two minutes, Mr Speaker. We still have, I believe, two minutes, or are we done? Are we done?

**The Acting Speaker:** No. As usual, there were four and then a reply.

Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

**Mr McMeekin:** Heretofore known as ADFA, Mr Speaker. I'll try to be more careful with my comments.

In direct response to the throne speech, I want to say that the people of ADFA, my home riding, were looking for leadership in the throne speech. Very much a move

away from what is perceived in our part of the world is the no-fault insurance that this government policy seems to carry with them. Whenever something goes wrong, it's somebody else's fault.

1700

They were anxious, but I think there was some encouragement from their member, who led them to believe that there would in fact be a substantive vision shared as to where this province would be going. They were quite anxious to see that substantive vision, rather than a bunch of worded vagaries that they found profoundly disappointing, I think it's fair to say.

I've heard it said that vision without action is a dream and action without a vision is a nightmare. I would commend those words to the government opposite. As one of my farm constituents said after reading a copy of the throne speech I'd sent on to him, he suddenly understood what the words "compassionate conservatism" mean. They mean having compassion for Conservatives.

I know what the people in my riding were looking for was a government that would be prepared to address the real concerns of working families and articulate a plan that would indeed be one that would see us acting in the common good.

The people of Ancaster, Dundas and Flamborough have a bunch of concerns, some of which I want to share with you.

They're worried very much about health care, this universal access to publicly funded health care. They were worried, as I was worried, when we read the government's own reference to the spending in that area being 19% higher than ever before.

Talk about a government that claims they want to be accountable, I couldn't believe that in the throne speech, after lamenting the rise in health care costs, they posed the rhetorical question, "Is the health care system in fact 19% better than it was?" I think it says something significant that the government wasn't in a position to answer that.

There is concern in my community about some \$250 million in health care costs that are about to be off-loaded on to the local municipality and the suggestion made by the government's own special adviser that half of that be picked up in the municipality, perhaps through property taxes.

There is very real concern about the lack of foresight around front-end loading of capital costs with respect to long-term care. Some 24% of the people who are currently in the four acute care hospitals in the Hamilton area shouldn't be there. They are there at \$802 a day when you get wonderful long-term care at St Joseph's Villa for about \$100 a day.

They are very concerned that tuition fees have escalated 65% in the last five years.

They are phenomenally concerned with the off-loading of costs to municipalities. They specifically worry about what's going to happen to their property taxes if and when we ever see a slowdown in the

economy; these recession-sensitive services, particularly social services and social housing.

They are concerned about democracy and how it sometimes appears to them to not be working anywhere near as well as they'd like.

And of course they are concerned about tax increases and the kind of off-loading of costs that is going to make it very difficult, particularly for seniors and those on fixed incomes, who very soon, if things keep going the way they're going, will have to make the very cruel decision of giving up their homes.

There is continued concern—and we saw it on the front page of the *Hamilton Spectator* today—with the escalation of user fees; anticipated service cuts; the assault on literacy, as community-based libraries close; the school chaos that's been created by pitting one community against another with this off-the-wall funding formula; the lack of accountability with respect to the \$9.1 million that were saved by this government in the face of a plan by the school board and parent groups to use that money that was saved during the work disruption to rescue some days for our kids, and this government's unwillingness to respond to that.

Needless to say, there is ongoing concern about amalgamation, particularly since the C.D. Howe report came out and spelled out the experience. We have the city of Montreal promising that they're going to learn from the mistakes of the city of Toronto. We had the city of Toronto promising they'd learn from the mistakes of Halifax. We had Halifax promising they'd learn from the mistakes of Winnipeg.

Yet, we've got a government on the other side of the House which continues to put increasing emphasis on very foolish and misguided restructuring. We're seeing this in some of our partner associations out there. AMO recently came out with a report which was very consistent with the municipal tour that I and a few of my colleagues had undertaken, showing profound mistrust for this government and many, many comments about their very poor communication with municipalities.

On the issue of Smart Growth, there is a real sense that this government hasn't been clear as to what they mean by Smart Growth. Yes, we're hearing all the buzzwords, but we're getting very little substance. In fact, to date, this government's statements seem to raise more questions than answers. Government references to consultation are in fact helpful, but we need to acknowledge that they only make a difference to the extent that we can move from process to substance.

Frankly, it's a lot like the old Wendy's commercial when you come to this Smart Growth animal. I need to ask, being from a rural constituency, where's the beef? It just doesn't seem to be there.

Let me state that what's needed in order to foster Smart Growth rather than dumb decline are what I call the three Ps. We need to be talking seriously about partnership planning with our partners; we need to be talking about power sharing, something that's new to this government; and we need, of course, to be talking about

proper funding. That's what's needed if we want to replace the kind of dumb decline that we've been seeing over the years with Smart Growth.

It's not enough for members of the opposition just to lean on their horns all the time. There's a responsibility to be positive and I certainly want to do that. I want to suggest that problems can't be resolved at the same level and awareness that created them. I think it was Einstein who defined insanity as doing things the way they've always been done and expecting a different result.

I want to make a series of very specific suggestions in the minute or so that I have left, that I want to commend to the government because I want, like all the other members of the Liberal caucus, to be as helpful as we can.

I think the government needs to be looking at job creation tax credits. That's something I think there'd be some support for. We need an enhancement of historic preservation tax credits and a commitment to revitalize inner city and rural schools. We need to look seriously at the establishment of rural legacy programs. We need to give some real credence when we talk about government policies that will actually preserve local decision-making authority.

We need imaginative transit policies that recognize the need for ongoing sustainable capital and operating costs. We need to respond to a burden and deferred infrastructure expenditure vacuum. And we need to find special capital cost allowances for the brownfields developments that this government frequently talks about but doesn't really seem to be developing a strategy for.

Finally, we need the courage to mandate urban growth boundaries that make difficult choices between spending more to grow, or less to sustain the strong and healthy communities we currently have.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** I appreciate the opportunity to stand today to speak in reply to the speech from the throne. Traditionally, speeches from the throne have been long on rhetoric and short on substance. I agree this year's speech set a precedent, because it's short on rhetoric and short on substance, both. I hope that doesn't continue in the future and certainly, given the opportunity that we hope to have some day, I would hope that our throne speech does not fall into the category of this year's.

1710

Nonetheless, I want to speak, in the few minutes that I have, a bit about health care to begin with, and health care in the context of accountability, because that seems to be the theme of the day. As the member for Peterborough mentioned earlier that we don't give any credit to privatization or the private sector, on this side of the Legislature—he should be very careful in imputing any motives on this side of the Legislature. He has quite enough to take care of on his own side. But let me tell you this, and I'll repeat it so that people can hear it, because the Minister of Transportation appreciated it when I said it before. I was in the private sector for 36 years—and I suggested in fact the Minister of Trans-



portation might not even be that old; I don't know whether he is or not, but I wish him well as he grows older—and I have an appreciation for the private sector. There is a place for the private sector to play; there is role for the private sector to play. But the Premier said over the last few days, and particularly last Saturday night in a television interview, “You know, we've spent 19% more in the last two years, I think it is, on health care, and do you think it's 19% better?” No, we don't. In fact, I think the Premier in his remarks even said that he doesn't think we got 19% more results.

But when it comes to accountability, who's responsible for that? You've been the government now for six years and if you're not getting 19% more out of it, who are you going to blame? Are you going to blame the public sector and say, “The only answer to it is we've got to hand this over to the private sector”? I think not. I think that you, number one, government members, have to shoulder that blame if you haven't gotten the results you wanted. You've been the government for six years and when it comes to being accountable in health care, what do we have? In my riding of Essex, we have 40,000 people who don't have a family doctor. That's shameful. If you'd been more accountable in even the first year of your government, we would have those doctors ready to graduate today.

What happens in hospitals across the province, not only in my own riding? There are lineups. Were there lineups six years ago? I don't recall, when I first was elected in 1993, over seven years ago, that there were the lineups in emergency wards that there are today. So who's accountable for that? Well, the government says, “It's not our fault. It's the hospitals' fault. It's not the fact that we took \$7 billion away from them. That doesn't matter. They're the ones who are accountable, not this government.” I think it's time you stood up and took the view that—wasn't it the former President of the United States, Harry Truman, who said, “The buck stops here”? If you're not happy and you've had six years to work on it, then at least take the blame for it and don't try to shove it off on to somebody else.

Another thing in accountability: we have a great need for special-needs assistants in our schools in Essex county. It just isn't adequate; there's a shortfall. If you'd only taken some of the \$235 million that you spent on advertising and put some of it toward those special-needs kids in the riding of Essex and other ridings across this province, you wouldn't have to bear that responsibility, that accountability, that shortfall. But believe me, there is one. And who's responsible for it? You folks are. You've had your six years so far to solve that problem.

When we talk about privatization versus public, I have a definition. I'd like to look at it this way and I think people understand it this way: “public” is either funded by the public purse—that being the taxpayers of this province—or volunteers. That, to me, is generally speaking the not-for-profit sector. But do you know what “private” means to me? It means for-profit. It means that somebody is going to make a buck out of this, and you

can bet it isn't the ordinary working family in this province. It isn't the ordinary working family in this province that's going to benefit from the privatization of, say, our public hospitals.

As a matter of fact, some are fans of that program ER. That takes place in a publicly funded hospital. It's a county hospital. But do you know what they're always faced with in that county hospital, if you believe the dramatization of it? They're always faced with the fact that they have patients come in and they aren't supposed to give them the treatment. You know, where those doctors are found out and the little, short head surgeon comes and berates them? There's nothing wrong with being short, mind you, but I'm just trying to describe the doctor I'm speaking of—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Crozier:** As opposed to the tall one, yes.

But he's always berating them because they're giving inappropriate treatment, not because it's not needed but because the hospital shouldn't pay it because the hospital can't afford it because it's a publicly funded hospital in that American system.

Do you know what they don't show you? They don't show you the private hospitals. They don't show you the plush private hospitals that make hundreds of millions of dollars in profit and that, even then, you have to struggle to get into because of the managed health care system that they have in the United States. Believe me, I honestly believe in my heart of hearts that if we privatize public hospitals, we're going to end up with a managed health care system where you won't be able to get the health care you need unless some insurance bureaucrat says to the doctor, “You can give that treatment.” Otherwise, you'll end up in one of those county hospitals where that mean-spirited doctor says, “You can't give them the treatment they need,” and where doctors and nurses will be forced to work around the system. That's what I think we're going to have with private hospitals.

Something that wasn't mentioned in the throne speech—and I'd like to go on about health care and hospitalization because there is so much to say about it and so much that you haven't done in the six years that you've had the opportunity, but I want to say a little bit about agriculture. Again, the throne speech was short on substance. In fact, it didn't even mention agriculture. The word “agriculture” was not mentioned in the throne speech, and where I come from in the county of Essex, that's a shame, because we have a thriving agricultural industry when it comes to the greenhouse growers, although they're not without their challenges these days with high energy costs and competition from the US. We have grain and oilseed farmers who aren't getting the assistance they need. Are they getting enough assistance from the federal government? I don't think so. Are they getting enough from the provincial government? Absolutely not.

In fact, I challenge you to put it on the table and challenge the federal government to come on down and match it. But you guys didn't even have the decency to

mention the second-largest industry in the province of Ontario. That shows me, then, where is the accountability to the farmers of this province? You have absolutely none, not only—at this point you just don't have any credibility with them, I don't think, because you've hung them out to dry.

I've touched on health care and agriculture. I have a letter from a radiologist who needs your help, but I know my time is up.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

1720

**Mr Bisson:** I kind of appreciated the reference that was made by the member when he talked about accountability of the government. There was a whole theme inside their throne speech, where they talked about government being more accountable. I guess generally everybody wants government to be more accountable. God, I want my wife to be more accountable with our finances. She certainly wants me to be more accountable in how I spend my money. So it's a sort of motherhood-and-apple-pie kind of statement.

But my problem is this: There's a lot of doublespeak by the government. They talk about accountability and I look at the decisions they've made where they've not been accountable since 1995. I'll just give you one as an example.

Mike Harris said, "I'm going to go out and privatize highway maintenance. I'm going to do that because I'm going to tell you right now there is going to be better service and we're going to do it for less." In fact, on the record was Ernie Eves, the then Minister of Finance, who said, "If we go out and privatize highway maintenance and we don't save at least 2% per year, we're not going to do it." Where's the accountability?

At the end of the day, we privatized highway maintenance and now, guess what? It's costing us more money than it used to be before, by quite a bit, and we're getting less service and worse-maintained roads when you look at what happened over the last couple of winters. So I say, where is the accountability in their decisions as it touches on issues that they're directly in control of?

I look at, for example, the Premier, who says outside of the House that he doesn't like to come to this place. I say, listen, like it or dislike it, the British parliamentary system says that you have to have a thing called question period where the opposition is able to ask questions of the Premier in order to make him accountable for the decisions he's made as Premier of the government and of this Legislature. But the Premier himself says he doesn't want to come to the Legislature. So if he doesn't want to come here, it seems to me he is not being accountable. Therefore, they're not practising what they preach. Another promise made, another promise not kept.

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** I want to touch on health care, if I may, because I find the debate right now fascinating. I've got a book in my hand that was written back in 1984. Back in 1984, people were talking about the problems we had in health care.

**Mr Sergio:** That was a century ago.

**Hon Mr Clark:** It was a century ago, the member says. It was a century ago. In fact, then, you know what? Governments weren't listening. The quote in the conclusion of this chapter says about the present health care delivery system, "... the general agreement [is] that the present delivery model is inefficient and may lead to inappropriate care for the elderly. It was noted that this delivery system is very expensive and, without revision, can be expected to become more costly as the population ages." This was written by an actuary, Professor Robert Brown at the University of Waterloo, 1984. The CMA, the OMA, every province in the country knew that health care was not sustainable, and every government in the country refused to address the fact that it was not sustainable in its current mode.

What we have is the Canada Health Act that states very clearly, "You must have universal access for this amount of services for everyone." Then, the province of Ontario, because it was a compassionate province, under all governments that were in this province, developed another set of services that were beside the Canada Health Act—not in the Canada Health Act—that we provided. The federal government went from 50-50 funding to 13 cents on the dollar. So we have to maintain the Canada Health Act with an aging population that in about 10 years will actually bankrupt Nova Scotia—this is the truth. We have to maintain this, but we also have this political reality of these other services that the federal government doesn't want to look at.

Quite clearly, either the federal government has to come to the table and fund 50-50 to ensure the Canada Health Act or we have to start looking at the services that are outside of it that we're providing today.

**Mr Sergio:** My compliments to my colleagues the member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot and the member from Essex on a terrific explanation of some details of the last budget—a budget, really, that wasn't. The only thing that it gave us were 21 missteps—not 21 steps; 21 missteps.

**Interjection:** Excuses.

**Mr Sergio:** Excuses, yes. We have seen in this particular—I won't call it "budget"—what they have done frantically to the health care system and to hospital care, and then we have seen that they have introduced the "three Cs," I call them: chaos, crisis and confrontation. They totally devastated these two areas and now they are trying to bring back some measures with repairs and stuff like that.

The Premier says, "What is the problem with privatizing health care or hospitals?" We have a lot of problems with that. "Why do you have a problem with private universities, education, stuff like that?" We have a lot of problems with that. You can ask anyone today and say, "Are you better off today than five, six or seven years ago?" The answer is, "No, we are not better off." Are we getting a better education today?" "No, we are not." "Is education important?" "Very important." That is why Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal leader, four years ago



introduced the report called First Steps with respect to childhood education. We said to the Premier, "Take it. Run with it. It's yours. Go ahead and do it." They didn't do it because it came from us. Yes, indeed they have created chaos, crisis and confrontation in every aspect and now they are trying to cover up.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** It is a pleasure to take part in the debate this afternoon. The member opposite from ADFA, Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot—the name of the riding is as long as mine, Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, and of course the member from Essex took part in that. The Minister of Transportation spoke so eloquently about health care and health care needs of Ontarians. He may not have mentioned it in today's debate, but I know we have had discussions with him that private health care is not such a bad word. That has been going on in Ontario for a long time.

**Hon Mr Clark:** Shouldice Clinic.

**Mr Gill:** Yes, the Shouldice Clinic, which is one of the best hernia hospitals anywhere. They have private labs. I don't know why it has become taboo. People just don't even want to think about it. When Mr Romanow goes around the country talking about the state of the health care system in Canada, I think anything and everything should be on the table.

I don't think we can sustain the present spending. As the Minister of Health said the other day, under the current rate of spending, within the next four or five years every tax dollar will be spent on health care. I don't think we can ignore any other programs. There's a lot of need for other programs. Therefore, we must go down to the so-called basic or zero-based budgeting and find out what the best value is for taxpayer dollars. Like the opponent members sometimes say, it's not the government's money; it's the money of the taxpayers. Similarly, when we found that we had \$1-billion surplus, we gave \$200 back to each individual taxpayer. That was their money and people know how to best use their money, not the government.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Essex has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Crozier:** It's too bad the minister from Stoney Creek doesn't understand that specific transfers under the health and social services transfers were reduced perhaps and, in some cases, it was changed because a former Conservative government wanted tax credits instead.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member should be fully aware, after all the years he's been here, that the proper way to address a minister of the crown is to address him by his full title, not as "the minister from" a certain area. The minister he referred to is the Minister of Transportation.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point of order, but I've heard them referred to as both or as either.

**Mr Crozier:** Now I know why the first part of your name is spelled the way it is.

Let me read too from somebody who's written something. Dr Gervais is a diagnostic radiologist in my riding today writes:

"There are four-to-seven-week waits for basic diagnostic tests, both in and out of hospital and more specialists are leaving each month ..."

In February of this year, he wrote and reapplied for funding for diagnostic testing that he had received in the past. Two months later, the day before appeal must be filed, the ministry writes him a letter denying continuation of his diagnostic services in the Windsor, LaSalle and Amherstburg areas. There are only four community-based radiologists in a county of 300,000 and Dr Gervais writes for our help. He needs your help.

I have another letter where they're pleading for money for a son who needs special care and yet they're denied.

1730

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** It's a pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to a throne speech. I want to welcome the citizens of Ontario to this political forum. It's 5:25, it's Monday afternoon—

**Hon Mr Clark:** It's 5:30.

**Mr Marchese:** Give or take a couple of minutes? Five-thirty of the clock.

**Hon Mr Clark:** Not from your angle.

**Mr Marchese:** Because the angle is always important, it's true, Mr Chair—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, they do it all the time. But it's a pleasure. I like it. I don't want the Speaker to interrupt our debate and dialogue, because I enjoy it.

**Hon Mr Clark:** Absolutely.

**Mr Marchese:** But let me get into this for a while, then we'll engage each other. OK. Because one of the—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Hold on, John, I've got a lot of things to say, and then we'll dialogue. OK? Because one of the key features of this government, or at least one of the buzzwords, is "accountability," isn't it, member for Stoney Creek? Correct. We are in agreement with that. And they—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Well, that's the question for the citizens: "Do you believe that? Yes or no?" And the question of accountability is, accountability to whom, when—

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** That would be the auditor.

**Mr Marchese:** And the question is, are they accountable to you, good citizens? If so, when do they do that and how do they hide themselves when they are caught by people like the auditor of this province, who I think has got a very keen eye?

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** He just refused to sign your books that year.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Marchese:** Ah, well, let's talk about your books for a while, David.

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** He's never refused—

**Mr Marchese:** OK, but I want to talk about your books, right? Because you've got the limousine, right? When you have the four wheels and somebody's driving you, it's your books we're talking about and not mine, because that's what counts. And accountability is something that you value a great deal.

The member from Stoney Creek says, "Yup."

**Hon Mr Clark:** I couldn't hear you.

**Mr Marchese:** No, no, but you agreed earlier; I'm just repeating it. Ah, he's going to stop.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'd like to caution those on this side that you can't interrupt and interject, and I'd like to ask the speaker from Trinity-Spadina to address your comments through the Chair, please.

**Mr Marchese:** As always, Speaker; always through you, although from time to time I glance with my left eye to the members to engage them and from time to time I tend to keep my right eye on you. But I don't mind the dialogue with the members. I appreciate it, except when they're interrupting me too often. Then I plead for your support to keep the order. But unless that's the case, I like the dialogue, Speaker, if you don't mind. OK.

The auditor's report, you will recall—that was, what, in the month of November of the year 2000? It's not too far away. It's within grasp of our memory. Usually they tend to go deeply into the recesses of our minds and bodies, but in this case November 2000 isn't so far away that you are likely to forget.

But you will recall the auditor's report exposing some of your failures with respect to issues of accountability. The wonderful quotation I want to bring to bear on this discussion, because I remember the member from London West, in a program that he and I did, the Michael Coren Show, where I said that the government has been quoted as saying, "We are not the government."

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** Could he get a word in edgewise?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke North, come to order.

**Mr Marchese:** I remember saying on that program, "We are not the government, you often said," and the member for London West said, "We never said that. Who said that?" I said, "Well, you did. Most of your members have said that, your government, your Premier."

But the quotation is, "We are not the government. We are the people elected to fix the government." That's just to remind you that you did say that you are not the government and that you're—

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Come on now, what's the context? Put it in the right context.

**Mr Marchese:** Sorry, what context are we talking about?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** In terms of when we say that, context.

**Mr Marchese:** I'm not sure it matters what context it's in. I'm not sure it matters. The fact of the matter is, you said that you didn't say that you were not the government. It doesn't matter what the context is; the quotation

is, "We are not the government. We are here, we are the people elected to fix the government," which means you guys are not politicians, which means you don't have a clue about being government. You're here to just fix it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Well, if they're not the government they can't be accountable to anybody, except that they say they are, and by virtue of their power, "We're accountable." You just have to say, "We're accountable." That's all that matters. But I understand you are not the government; somebody else is. Perhaps Ralph Klein in Alberta is, but here, you're not.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** I know, member from Stoney Creek. Just bear with me. The good citizens of Ontario will just have to decide—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** They're not?

**Mr Wettlaufer:** They're not watching you any more.

**Mr Marchese:** But of course they are.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** They're looking at you and you're just preaching drivels.

**Mr Marchese:** Oh, I'm not sure they think what I am saying is drivels. I am not sure of that. But it's for them to decide, not for me, or for you, member from Kitchener Centre. It's for them to decide, and you will agree with that. It's something we can't dispute because the public will decide for us whether they like us or not, whether we're speaking drivels or not and whether you're the government or not or whether you're the non-government government here to fix the government.

**Hon Mr Clark:** My remote's broken. You're still on.

**Mr Marchese:** It doesn't work. You've got to fix it.

"Consider the case of Agricorp." This is what the Provincial Auditor at the time told us was a matter of serious concern. It's an issue I want to connect with respect to the issue of accountability. These are the people that you appoint. The people of Agricorp are people you have appointed—remember, 99.9% Tories, because that's the way you guys like it. It makes you feel good to appoint Tories because then you know how to control the agenda. They only have to be accountable to you and no one else. By and large, 99% of the time they're Tories. I wanted to leave some percentage for some people to escape through the net so they could be non-Tories, but by and large, I think you will agree with me that they're all Tories.

"Agricorp holds crop insurance funds in trust and is supposed to invest them prudently so that they're available if crops fail." That's its purpose and mandate. M. Peters said the following: "We became so concerned about Agricorp's repeated attempts to violate its fiduciary responsibility that, in a very unusual move for my office, we had to take action to ensure that Ontario crop insurance assets were not inappropriately used." Remember, these are people that you appointed to the board.

"The inappropriate uses? Among other things, Peters said, 'Agricorp lost \$325,000 of taxpayers' money in two



weeks of speculative day trading and tried to charge the loss to the Ontario crop insurance fund.”

My first point is, if you are here to fix government, you've got to watch that the people you appoint, with whom you have a very special relationship, have some accountability to someone, and it ought to be you people. You, the non-government government, should look out for us, should look out for the taxpayers, and you should look out for it in advance of the problem happening.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The members for Stoney Creek and Etobicoke North, come to order.

**Mr Marchese:** The problem is, the issue came and went and everybody left you alone. It didn't last for too long. It was just one brief little day and, God behold, it disappeared. It's amazing how people do not hold you as accountable as they need to. You are one of the few—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Come on, member for Stoney Creek, don't do that. Mr Speaker, it's unfair when he does that, as if to dismiss me so nonchalantly. It's not so simple. Again, my relationship isn't with you, it's with the public. We are discussing with the public whether or not they will say this to me or whether they're going to say this to you, because the issue that I'm speaking to is accountability and the special relationship you have with the very special interest groups you hire to be on these committees. They ain't ordinary working people you're putting on some of these committees. These people have a very close and special connection to some of you, and I don't trust a whole lot of them.

1740

**Hon Mr Sterling:** That's how you guys operated. You assume we operate it like you.

**Mr Marchese:** That's exactly the point I make, that you claim to operate differently, and I'm pointing out the errors in terms of how bad you really are and how unaccountable you people are. The fact that you appoint Tories doesn't mean they will not expose themselves at some point in terms of these problems.

The next one: far bigger in dollars is the Teranet system, which in 1991 when we introduced it was a \$275-million project to automate the land registry system.

**Mr Tilson:** I can't believe you're raising that.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I can't believe you're going down this road.

**Mr Marchese:** No, that's an interesting one. I'm sorry, but by 1998, while you people were in government from 1995 to 1998, three years into Harris's mandate, the cost estimate hit \$560 million. You guys are in control; you've got the wheel. If you don't like it, if you obviously didn't like the idea of automating the land registry system, you've got to fix it, right?

You can't say on the one hand that you're here to fix government and on the other hand say, “Oh, no, but you guys started it,” right? It's like saying, when the NDP was in government—you will recall, Minister Sterling, that when we were in government former Premier Bob Rae used to rail against the federal government, both

Tory government and Liberal government. I recall some of you guys here sitting on this side saying, “Oh, stop whining. You're whining so much about what the federal government has been doing to you. You've got the wheel. You've got to rule. You've got to manage the economy.” You remember that, Minister Sterling? Then, when you guys get into government, you say, “Ha, we have to start blaming and attacking the federal Liberal government because they're not giving us any money for health, they're not giving us any money for housing, they're not giving us any money presumably for post-secondary, or whatever it is.” You're the biggest whiners I've ever seen in this place.

You, in the context—

**Hon Mr Clark:** You should listen to yourself.

**Mr Marchese:** No, I am listening, member from Stoney Creek, because I remember very clearly your Premier, Stockwell—

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll not warn the member for Stoney Creek again.

**Mr Marchese:**—and including Mr Carr, the Speaker, with all due respect, who often attacked us when we attacked the federal government in a recession for not giving us the financial support we were due. You guys hit the jackpot in terms of having a good economy and you start whining about the federal Liberal government not giving you any support, whining like little children.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Members from Bramalea and Oxford, come to order.

**Mr Marchese:** With loads of money coming into your coffers, you start attacking them for not getting the support. Please.

So talking about the land registry system, last year they hit \$700 million. This year they're more than \$1 billion. What are you managing here? If you're here to fix the government, fix some of these things. Why haven't you fixed it? That's disappointing. You might laugh, Minister Sterling, but the fact of the matter is I take your word, saying, “We're the non-government government. We're here to fix it.” Lo and behold, there's a whole lot of people who profit so much from you.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** You did the deal, Rosie. We didn't do the deal.

**Mr Marchese:** We did the deal.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** You signed the papers.

**Mr Marchese:** In the same way, with the 407, which within 20 years would have been in our hands as a government, you people decided, “No, it's not good enough. We're going to give it away to the private sector for 99 years and they have complete control in terms of how much.”

The member from Stoney Creek is holding his head.

They give it away completely to the private sector for 99 years and the rates have gone up in the last couple of years. They have doubled in the last couple of years, all because they have a special relationship with the private sector. It's called grana, it's called moolah, it's called pecunia, it's called a special connection to the special

interest group which is the private sector. That's what I'm talking about. Or what about what Peters says, that it will take \$100 million to get the ambulance system to the point where lives won't be at risk and the government has only put \$30 million. Talk about accountability to the public in saving lives. They put in \$30 million and Provincial Auditor Peters says we need \$100 million, in terms of accountability of human lives. Right?

You guys can find the billions and billions of dollars to give away to the special interest groups—the private sector special interest groups, special relationship you have with them—and that's OK to give my money and the money of the good citizens of Ontario and you give it away to the private sector because you say, "Because we can."

The pecunia, the loads and loads of moolah that goes out to these private guys, and they're drooling with excitement, like they drool with excitement to be able to let—Minister Sterling, I tell you they're drooling with glee and excitement as my money and the taxpayers' money and the citizens' money simply just rolls away in wheelbarrows. Drooling, salivating, salivating continually, they're saying, "What more can we privatize so that we can squeeze a little more?" Here we have a government, the instrument of the private sector, ready to privatize water, ready to privatize hydro, all for and ready to privatize more of the health care system. Why? So that some of the special friends can be greased a little more. That's the special relationship you have with this sector.

The highway maintenance was mentioned earlier on by my colleague from Timmins-James Bay. The highway maintenance was supposed to have saved money. I recall M. Eves, the former Minister of Finance, said, "It's going to save us money." Well, the auditor revealed that we're not saving money. Even in that regard we're not saving money. We were supposed to have a 2% saving, but we are losing money. The taxpayer and the citizens of Ontario combined—you're losing money. Why? Because M. Eves and you, Speaker, and all the rest of them have decided that to give it away to the private sector would save. Save for whom? It's a big saving for those who've got the moolah and the power, and you people are so closely colluded to them it's just insulting to see the whole thing. It's almost perverse, I would add—"insulting" doesn't say anything, but the relationship you have with them is almost perverse.

What more? The cabinet office costs. It was so nice to see the deputy leader, I think it was. I don't know. He blah, blah, blahed about something in response to the fact that you're spending more on hiring special assistants to do your work. You people have increased costs to yourselves in terms of cabinet offices to the tune of, I don't know, a 30% increase. What accountability is it, concerned citizens of Ontario and taxpayers? To whom are they accountable? Are they accountable to you? Maybe they speak for you, but I'm not sure.

All these examples I give you—and there's so much more—how do you respond to that? Their responses to the economic woes are the following: "We've got to

tighten our belts some more. We had a good five years of a wonderful economy," they say, and then all of a sudden the economy is in a tailspin in the US and they're worried—they ought to be. They are saying, "The way to deal with this retrenchment of our economy is to do three or four things: "We've got to fire some more civil servants"—because firing 15,000 wasn't enough. "We've got to tell the ministries they've got to tighten their belts"—as if they haven't done that for the last five years. "We've got to tighten some more." And they said, with the typical arrogance and peacockery of this government, "We're going to continue with our tax cuts no matter how wayward, no matter how whacko it is and no matter what other economists say. We are hell-bent on giving people more of a tax cut. Why? "Because we can. Because we say so." By fiat, by ex cathedra power that you hold in your little hands, four more billion bucks are going to go away to the private sector and other individuals. These are the wonderful ideas these people have to keep our economy strong. It's going down the tubes soon, and you remember your Premier saying, "We've created a recession-proof economy." How? The tax cuts. And what are they going to do? They're going to give some more tax cuts for the next couple months or years.

*Applause.*

**Mr Marchese:** God bless you. David Turnbull, God bless him. He's OK. David Turnbull from—somewhere.

The tax cuts are the answer, the magic bullet for economic growth. I don't know whom they're talking to, good citizens, but it's not serious economists. They have a special interest for those people who gain from it, and it's not you.

**1750**

**Mr Galt:** I'm always pleased to be in the House when the member for Trinity-Spadina is speaking. He is indeed very entertaining. I love his body language, but some of the content of his presentation leaves a lot to be desired.

He talked about the 1995-98 period of whining, and the Bob Rae government and whining. Wow, I heard the whining all the way down to Northumberland when Bob Rae was whining. He didn't need a PA system; you could hear it across the province. I don't hear that kind of whining now. We're doing what is necessary.

I think he was talking about the recession in Ontario. Who caused the major part of that recession? They were going to spend their way out of it, spend their way out of a recession. I think we could be into the same kind of recession right now if we had the same policies as the NDP back in 1990-91. We could be spiralling right into the same kind of basement they went into.

With the kind of policy we have, the fiscal responsibility, I think that's why we're hardly even seeing a blip in Ontario. When they were in such a recession, things were moving along in the US and also in provinces like BC. But when they got the kind of policies you people were using, they spiralled down similarly.

You talked about Highway 407 and its being privatized. I heard your minister talk about its being a private



organization. That's how they were going to build it. I was here six months before I started to realize that you people were building it with public money. I was under that impression, and certainly I was at the Good Roads Association when your minister was speaking about, "It's going to be a private highway." I was very disappointed to find out where it was at.

When you talk about good managing, I suppose good managing was slashing every collective agreement negotiated with the public service. Right across this province you slashed each and every one of them and called it a social contract. I don't think that was good management.

**Mr McMeekin:** This afternoon has been a real education for me. I've heard about perverse dollar trading and I've heard the terms "arrogance" and, I think, "peacockery."

I thought the throne speech was supposed to be about inspiration and imagination and determination. I need to say, as a relatively new member of this House who listened to the Lieutenant Governor speak for her 19 minutes or so, that there seemed to be, through no fault of hers, very little inspiration, next to no imagination and a seemingly dogged determination to avoid specifics of any regard with so many issues.

One of my colleagues earlier talked about the throne speech saying absolutely nothing about agriculture. It says next to nothing about the environment. It talks vaguely about gridlock and smart growth, whatever that is. There is no mention at all about social housing and the people there.

I had the good fortune, some 25 years or so ago, of working for a member of this House in one of the intern programs. I think it's appropriate to say that this government is very different from the governments of Frost, Robarts and Davis, governments that could perhaps, with some credibility, be referred to as common sense governments that really understood the common good. That's not this government and that's not the throne speech we heard the other day. Davis, Frost and Robarts did a lot of work with select committees, and they made a commitment to working together to solve the problems of this province. I'd like to suggest that's what we need.

**Mr Bisson:** It is always a pleasure to listen to comments by the member for Trinity-Spadina because, like many people in the assembly, I get to learn more words I can add to my vocabulary each and every time. I'm amazed. There was the word "peacockery." There were a whole bunch of words that I am now going to add to my new dictionary of words that we can use within the Legislature. First of all, on those new words, Mr Marchese, I would like to congratulate you on bringing them to the House.

To the other issue, though, the bigger issue that he raises, which is that of accountability, I've got to say that I agree, not only because we are good friends and we are colleagues in this House, but I look at the government and they say one thing in the throne speech, where they

talk about how, yes, they want more accountability, but when it comes to all the decisions they've made since 1995 when it comes to government expenditures, there are a whole bunch of examples where they've not been very accountable. I say good for the member for Trinity-Spadina for pointing that out.

He pointed out, for example, highway maintenance privatization, where the government said, "We're going to privatize because this is going to save us money and we're going to get better service. The private sector does it better; the public sector does it badly"—you know, that mantra they keep on repeating. We find out at the end that it cost us more money and we get worse services. But there's no accountability mechanism. Is anybody out there doing any kind of value-for-money audit that this government talks about, about what the private sector is not doing when it comes to highway maintenance and why it's costing us more money?

I say to the government, OK, if you want to have accountability, let's talk about mechanisms of accountability. But let's not just have you choose where you want that to happen so that you can make arguments about why then you should privatize this or why then you should privatize that. I say the government talks a good line when it comes to accountability—

**Mr Marchese:** Blah, blah, blah.

**Mr Bisson:** Blah, blah, blah, as my good friend from Trinity-Spadina says—but at the end of the day they speak one language but they act totally differently.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

**Mr Hastings:** First off, we have to correct the record on a couple of items, to the member for Trinity-Spadina. I didn't know he was this fascinated. It must be because of my own interest in agriculture issues, because we have to eat and the farmers of this province provide the food.

Let's get to the point. He talks about the auditor and the issue of misuse or misallocation of funds regarding Agricorp. Yes, it's true, there was a problem there. But as usual with the new debtors' party, what do we get? Half the story. If he went on and accounted for what occurred in the response from Agricorp regarding the \$325,000, you'd find that it has now been replaced. There isn't a penny lost for crop insurance. So I think on that he should get his score right.

For somebody who wants to talk about accountability and that this party or government has no interest in agriculture, again let us say we're still waiting on the feds, still waiting and waiting for their contributions for agricultural producers in this province, particularly the oilseeds sector. When is Mr Vanclief ever going to come through with his portion of the monies in addition to the \$90 million we've already put out?

In terms of the cheques getting out more quickly, I haven't seen anything—to counter or to contrast with the federal government's quick response, ours were out within a week. Proof? The Ontario Corn Producers' Association letter, one of many letters I have received on this issue. We did respond well.

To the member for Trinity-Spadina: accountability? When he was chairperson or a school trustee, surely he wouldn't countenance this kind of waste of money from the Toronto District School Board.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The member for Trinity-Spadina has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Marchese:** Good citizens, my question to you is, who is watching this government that is not a government, that wants to fix the government? Who is keeping an eye on them? I tell you, they're not accountable to anyone except themselves. I've got to tell you, you have to be vigilant. Nobody can be vigilant except yourselves, taxpayers, those of you who are worried about your pockets. They often refer to you. But, citizens, you've got to become much more actively involved, because they have a special connection to a most special interest group; that is, the most powerful people who are looking for this government to free up, to get out of the way, except when they need them to loosen up the purse strings. It's pecunia, it's grana, moolah. You know what that means. They are three peculiar words to you, I know, but you have a good sense of what this means, because this is a universal language. You don't need to know the

word "pecunia" to know what this means, right? No, we know. I've got to tell you, with respect to the last point I made, one of the business writers says the following: "But where Flaherty gets it all wrong is in his preoccupation with tax cuts as the solution." He quotes the minister as saying, "'If there is one constant in the equation, it has to be the tax cuts'..." This writer disagrees and so do I, profoundly. "But will businesses invest if they cannot find qualified people? Will they invest if traffic congestion is so bad, employees can't get to work or trucks cannot deliver products on time?"

He continues, "While tax rates are important," and he agrees with you that they are important, "they should not come at the expense of education, transportation, cities and other factors that make up the business environment." So while he even agrees with you in some areas, he's saying that you can't abandon everything else that's so important to—

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Marchese:** Thank you, good citizens.

**The Acting Speaker:** It now being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 pm tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac- Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
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Burlington	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiles, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
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Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
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		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
		Vaughan-King-Aurora	Vacant

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 30 avril 2001

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

**Loi de 2001 modifiant des lois  
en ce qui a trait à la fonction  
publique**, projet de loi 25,  
*M. Tsubouchi*  
Adoptée ..... 280

**Loi de 2001 sur les activités de  
financement des organismes de  
bienfaisance**, projet de loi 26,  
*M. Crozier*  
Adoptée ..... 280

**Loi de 2001 sur la protection de la vie  
privée du personnel du système  
de justice criminelle**,  
projet de loi 27, *M. Levac*  
Adoptée ..... 280

**Loi de 2001 modifiant le Code  
des droits de la personne**,  
projet de loi 28, *M. Ramsay*  
Adoptée ..... 280

**Loi de 2001 sur l'aménagement  
écologique de la moraine  
d'Oak Ridges**, projet de loi 29,  
*M<sup>me</sup> Churley*  
Adoptée ..... 281

SANCTION ROYALE

La lieutenant-gouverneure ..... 300

# CONTENTS

Monday 30 April 2001

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Walleye Weekend</b>	
Mrs Dombrowsky.....	277
<b>Agricultural funding</b>	
Mr O'Toole .....	277
<b>Government advertising</b>	
Mr Bradley .....	277
<b>Lincoln M. Alexander Secondary School</b>	
Mr Gill .....	278
<b>Golf tournaments</b>	
Mr Ramsay .....	278
<b>Education issues</b>	
Mr Marchese .....	278
<b>Canadian Drilling Rig Museum</b>	
Mr Barrett.....	279
<b>Government accountability</b>	
Mr Duncan .....	279
<b>Scenic City Order of Good Cheer</b>	
Mr Murdoch .....	280

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Public Service Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001, Bill 25, <i>Mr Tsubouchi</i></b>	
Agreed to.....	280
<b>Charity Fund-Raising Activities Act, 2001, Bill 26, <i>Mr Crozier</i></b>	
Agreed to.....	280
Mr Crozier.....	280
<b>Protecting the Privacy of Criminal Justice Personnel Act, 2001, Bill 27, <i>Mr Levac</i></b>	
Agreed to.....	280
Mr Levac.....	280
<b>Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2001, Bill 28, <i>Mr Ramsay</i></b>	
Agreed to.....	280
Mr Ramsay.....	280
<b>Oak Ridges Moraine Green Planning Act, 2001, Bill 29, <i>Ms Churley</i></b>	
Agreed to.....	281
Ms Churley.....	281

## MOTIONS

<b>Private members' public business</b>	
Mrs Ecker.....	281
Agreed to.....	281
Mrs Ecker.....	281
Agreed to.....	281

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Government accountability</b>	
Mr Tsubouchi .....	281
Mr Clement.....	282
Mr Flaherty .....	284
Mrs McLeod .....	284
Mr Hampton .....	285
Ms Lankin.....	286

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Private hospitals</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	287, 288
Mr Clement.....	287, 288
<b>Property taxation</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	289
Mr Flaherty .....	289
<b>Private cancer clinic</b>	
Ms Lankin.....	290
Mr Clement.....	290, 292
Mrs McLeod .....	291

<b>Health care funding</b>	
Mr Phillips.....	290
Mr Flaherty .....	290

<b>Ontario public service</b>	
Mr Dunlop .....	291
Mr Tsubouchi .....	291

<b>Post-secondary education</b>	
Mr Wettlaufer .....	292
Mrs Cunningham .....	292

<b>Competitive electricity market</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	293
Mr Wilson.....	293

<b>Long-term care</b>	
Mrs Papatello.....	294
Mr Clement.....	294

<b>Education labour disputes</b>	
Ms Mushinski .....	294
Mr Stockwell .....	294

<b>Services for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr Hoy .....	295
Mr Baird .....	295

<b>Assistance to farmers</b>	
Mr Beaubien .....	295
Mr Coburn .....	296

<b>Children's services</b>	
Ms Martel .....	296
Mr Baird .....	296

## PETITIONS

<b>Health care</b>	
Mrs McLeod .....	297
Mrs Papatello.....	299
Mr Levac .....	300

<b>Child care</b>	
Ms Martel.....	297
<b>Karla Homolka</b>	
Mr Hastings.....	297
<b>Air quality</b>	
Mr Bradley .....	297
<b>Brain tumours</b>	
Mr Wood.....	298
<b>Safe streets legislation</b>	
Mr Crozier .....	298
<b>Doctor shortage</b>	
Mr Marchese .....	298
<b>Horse riding safety</b>	
Mrs Molinari .....	299
<b>Autism services</b>	
Mrs Dombrowsky.....	299
<b>Protection of minors</b>	
Mr Gill .....	299
<b>Cell phones</b>	
Mr O'Toole .....	299

## ROYAL ASSENT

The Lieutenant Governor .....	300
-------------------------------	-----

## THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Mr Bryant.....	300
Mr Colle.....	302, 305
Mr Bisson.....	303, 307, 308, 312, 317
Mr O'Toole .....	304
Mrs Dombrowsky.....	304
Mr Tilson .....	304
Mr Stewart.....	305, 309
Mr Bradley .....	307
Mr Galt .....	308, 317
Mr McMeekin .....	308, 309, 317
Mr Sterling .....	308
Mr Levac .....	308
Mr Crozier.....	311
Mr Clark.....	312
Mr Sergio .....	313
Mr Gill .....	313
Mr Marchese .....	314, 318
Mr Hastings.....	318
Debate deemed adjourned .....	318

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Member's comments</b>	
Mr O'Toole .....	278
The Speaker.....	379
<b>Visitors</b>	
The Speaker.....	280
<b>Integrity Commissioner</b>	
The Speaker.....	286

Continued overlea



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22  
No. 8



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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 1 May 2001**

**Mardi 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2001**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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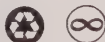
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### EVENTS IN FLAMBOROUGH AND ANCASTER

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** Today is a very important day in the riding of Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot, as we celebrate two wonderful events.

First, in the town of Flamborough, a town I know quite well, we will open the new Flamborough Family YMCA, a wonderful partnership project between the town of Flamborough and the Hamilton-Burlington Y. The new family Y is a great example of a creative entrepreneurial partnership and a living testament that those who are committed to putting their community first can accomplish together what neither could do apart.

As a snotty-nosed north end kid growing up through the YMCA who served as an overseas YMCA volunteer and later as YMCA president, I know first-hand the difference the YMCA has made in building strong people, strong families and strong, healthy communities both in Flamborough and across Ontario.

After opening our family Y, I will have the pleasure of travelling to the historic town of Ancaster to help celebrate the life and work of the Ancaster Rotary Club and three very special Ancaster Rotarians who will receive the Rotarians' highest honour, the Paul Harris Fellowship.

Notwithstanding whatever is wrong with Ontario, it's clear that what's right with Ontario is our people, people committed to the sharing, caring and daring that it takes to build the strong and healthy communities we all cherish.

#### NOVATRONICS

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** I rise in the Legislature today to recognize a company in my riding that recently watched its knowledge and expertise go up in space. Novatronics of Canada is a Stratford company that designs, develops and manufactures products for the aerospace and defence industries. Novatronics made a significant contribution to the new Canadarm2 that blasted into space two weeks ago on board the space

shuttle Endeavour with Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield. This Stratford company, established in 1955, designed and built 12 pineapple-sized motor modules that allowed the Canadarm to move, bend and lock into place. These modules also helped the 1,600-kilogram arm move large and small objects with pinpoint accuracy. Novatronics technology also allowed Canadarm2 to reach parts of the ever-expanding space station that couldn't be reached by the original Canadarm, now almost 20 years old.

I want to take this opportunity to commend Novatronics chairman Don McDougall and his 75 employees for their innovation, engineering expertise and product development. Designing and building technology that is accepted and used by NASA is quite an accomplishment.

I also want to congratulate Novatronics on recently receiving an Ontario Global Traders Award for its 54% growth in exports over the last two years and for its contributions to the global aerospace industry.

Thank you very much for congratulating Novatronics.

#### NURSES

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I rise today to pay tribute to Ontario's nurses. In recent months I've had the occasion to use Ontario's health care system to a greater degree than perhaps I would have liked, but during this time I have been fortunate to have been in the care of many wonderful nurses who continue to perform their essential services despite the many pressures that have been placed upon them.

Unfortunately, we are still hearing reports of labour shortages. The government's claim that they have rehired the nurses needed is deceiving. Nursing organizations are reporting to us that 50% of jobs now contracted out are either part-time or casual. This is how the government has maintained a large headcount, but only half of our nurses are full-time positions and the labour shortages remain a fact of life.

Many overworked nurses on the front lines are burned out. Many are leaving the province and indeed the country altogether.

The opportunity is there. A recent poll showed that over 78% of the nurses who had left Ontario would consider returning if conditions were right. The same poll showed that the number one concern for nurses was the availability of full-time work.

I am happy to report to my colleagues that my experience with Ontario's nurses shows they continue to be

outstanding and dedicated to their particular profession. I think it's incumbent upon the government to immediately hire the needed nurses so that they can continue to perform their important work in our health care system.

#### PROTECTION OF RESOURCES

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I know there are a lot of good citizens who think the Premier of this province is not a nice man, that in fact he can be tough. Well, it's true. There are a whole lot of citizens who think that, but I have to tell you there are two people across the border who are not seen as nice men; in fact, they're seen as bad, bad men.

When we think of Mike Harris as a bad wolf, big papa wolf is right around the corner, right around that border, and they're just waiting to come into Canada. Papa Bush and Papa Cheney are coming. The citizens know these guys are oilmen and they want to come into the northern regions of Canada—in their part of the world Alaska, but also our country and our provinces—and they want to suck the precious resources out of this country. So when we see Mike Harris and Klein ready to privatize, to sell off our public resources, sell off to the special friends that you boys have, you ain't seen nothing yet, because Papa Bush and Papa Cheney are coming around and they're saying, "We're ready to suck away the energies from you." What are Klein and people like Bush and the federal Liberal government saying? "At your orders, Papa Bush and Papa Cheney."

I've got to tell you, good citizens of Ontario, we need you. Someone's got to prevent this from happening. We need an active citizenry to prevent this, and I'm urging you to fight back against it.

#### PRISONER WORK PROGRAM

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Today I'm tabling a resolution asking the Legislature of Ontario to take immediate measures to expand the prisoner work program to more highways and neighbourhoods across Ontario.

I believe the expansion of this type of program is beneficial to the community and to the prisoner. It gives an offender the chance to give back to society and learn the value of a hard day's work. As well, offenders get a chance to keep their minds occupied with healthy, law-abiding ideas such as participating in the community. They are learning the value that individual organizations are to their communities as well.

1340

An example can be seen in my home riding of Simcoe North, where inmates at Project Turnaround have had the opportunity to work at the Huronia Museum, Coldwater Mill and Fairgrounds and the Midland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Working in these environments has given the young offenders an opportunity to expand their learning and a chance to give back to the community. Inmates assigned

to work on the prisoner work program are carefully screened, are low risk and do not pose a threat to the safety and security of the community. I believe in making sure those who commit crimes repay their debt to society.

A couple of prisoner work programs that already exist are the prisoner work program, in co-operation with the Ministry of Transportation, which benefits the environment at nominal cost to taxpayers and supports tourism. The program helps to create a clean, attractive landscape and gives offenders a chance to participate in a meaningful, constructive, outdoor activity as a way of giving something back to the community. Last August, the Ministry of Correctional Services announced a partnership with the Toronto Police Service community response unit to paint over walls that had been defaced by graffiti, as part of the graffiti eradication program.

I believe the prisoner work program is important for communities, as well as our offenders. I urge all members in this House to support and adopt this resolution.

#### LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** We in the official opposition welcome the opportunity today to question Premier Harris. Our understanding is that he will be attending question period today. We are delighted, because we haven't had that opportunity since December.

You know what? In January, February and March, my leader, Dalton McGuinty, was travelling this province, meeting with people, doing radio shows and talking to the average people in Ontario. Last week and the week before, Dalton McGuinty was doing interviews outside of this city. He was travelling this province and he was doing an effective job as Leader of the Opposition and the next Premier of Ontario. That's what real leadership's all about.

Dalton McGuinty has put forward plans on a number of fronts: doctor shortages, emergency rooms, classroom size, peace in our schools. Is it any wonder the Premier doesn't want to answer questions from Dalton McGuinty?

The real leadership in this province today is coming from Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals. It's coming in the way of rejecting the old ideas of the past that never worked, rejecting the neo-Conservative agenda of a Premier who would rather be in Florida golfing than in Ontario answering tough questions.

This agenda's about accountability. The real accountability will be when Dalton McGuinty becomes Premier of Ontario in two and half long years and shows what real leadership's about. It's about being accountable and being answerable to all the people of Ontario.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** I rise today to inform the House that May is Sexual Assault Prevention Month in Ontario. This government wants to stress that



we will not tolerate violence against women. We are committed to preventing this violence. In this year alone, we are investing \$140 million in programs and services that prevent and address violence against women, more funding than any previous government has dedicated toward combatting this crime. Make no mistake: violence against women is a crime.

Our community partners are invaluable to our strategy to wipe out violence against women. In just these last few weeks, we have announced a total of \$3.5 million for community-based organizations and projects that are assisting women.

I invite all the members to take part in the activities that sexual assault centres are planning throughout Ontario communities to mark this month. I know that in my own community, the Women's Sexual Assault Centre of York Region will be conducting outreach and public education in the schools this month to increase awareness about sexual assault prevention. This centre plays a very important role in our region, and I want to acknowledge the contribution they are making to addressing this issue.

Every woman has the right to live in safety. Together with our community partners, this government will continue to work toward that goal.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** Recently in this House we were afforded a chance to hear from the government on the theme of their throne speech: accountability. Yet we see in the days since then that the government will not walk the talk. They talk all about accountability, 11 references to it, in the government, and yet I was there in London last week when the Premier had an opportunity to field a question from a real person, a gentleman who had a problem around the health care of his child, and the Premier could no sooner jump in his Suburban and thrust the unsuspecting constituent into the hands, into the loving embrace, of the members from London.

This is one more example of a Premier who will not be held accountable for the actions of his government. It's in sharp contrast to the federal government, which has met regularly since the beginning of the year, and a Prime Minister who, in addition to going to China, was in the House of Commons for almost 60% of the question periods, being held accountable on difficult issues, while this Premier has run about the province, hiding from the accountability he likes to speak about.

We will have an opportunity shortly to hold him accountable, to ask him the difficult questions he has been avoiding these past days. We see that they continue to talk about accountability, that they continue to raise it as a theme, but they will not stand in support of it.

I challenge them to defy their constituents and the desire of their constituents to hold the government accountable and support my private member's bill this Thursday, which calls for 60% attendance of the Premier and cabinet ministers in question period.

## CRIME PREVENTION

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I am pleased to inform the Legislature that today the city of Niagara Falls will host the second annual Tourism Safety and Crime Prevention Conference.

The focus of the conference is to discuss crime prevention issues in both the business and tourism sectors. Last year, and this year again, Detective Ray Wood, director of the Orange county sheriff's office in Orlando, Florida, will facilitate the conference. Toronto Police Chief Julian Fantino will attend as lunch keynote speaker.

Topics that will be addressed at this year's conference include shoplifting, counterfeiting, fraud, computer crime fraud, ID fraud, crime prevention through environmental design and the outlawing of motorcycle clubs.

In regard to the issue of biker gangs, in January 2001 this government urged the federal government to establish a mandatory minimum sentence for organized criminal activity to help fight organized crime and biker gangs.

With a federal Liberal government that's soft on crime, it is impressive to see the province and local governments making public safety a priority.

I commend Niagara Falls city councillor Carolynn Ioannoni and the other organizers involved on the great effort that has been put into this event both last year and again this year.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** I beg leave to present a report on pre-budget consultations, 2001, un rapport sur les consultations prébudgétaires pour l'année 2001, from the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr Beaubien:** I would like to inform the House that the standing committee on finance and economic affairs held pre-budget meetings in Ottawa, London, Thunder Bay and Toronto.

There is not much time to debate the issue, but I would like to recognize and thank the members, the staff and all the presenters.

With this, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker:** Mr Beaubien moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

REMEDIES FOR ORGANIZED CRIME  
AND OTHER UNLAWFUL  
ACTIVITIES ACT, 2001LOI DE 2001 SUR LES RECOURS  
POUR CRIME ORGANISÉ  
ET AUTRES ACTIVITÉS ILLÉGALES

Mr Young moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to provide civil remedies for organized crime and other unlawful activities / Projet de loi 30, Loi prévoyant des recours civils pour crime organisé et autres activités illégales.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The Attorney General for a short statement?

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Mr Speaker, I'll make my statement during the ministers' statement period.

1350

LABOUR RELATIONS  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2001LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL

Ms Martel moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 / Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** It's fitting that I reintroduce this private member's bill today on International Workers' Day because the purpose of the bill is to ban the use of scab labour in Ontario.

It restores those sections of the NDP government's Bill 40 that prevented employers from using other workers to replace those legitimately on strike or locked out. It forces employers to sit down and bargain collective agreements because they know that no one else can take the jobs of those striking workers. It protects management and employees from employer reprisal when they refuse the work of bargaining sector employees on strike or lockout.

I originally introduced this bill on behalf of Mine Mill/CAW workers in my community who were on strike almost seven months and who experienced the use of scab labour by Falconbridge from day one of that strike. While that strike is over, this bill is needed by every other worker who is being undermined by their employer in the same way.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** It gives me great pleasure to rise today in the House to address the 19th step in our government's action plan to keep Ontario strong: enhancing community safety and victims' rights.

All Ontarians have a right to personal safety and security. Each person should be able to attend school and walk along the streets of this province without fear. They should all be able to expect to be safe and secure in their homes, in their businesses and in the communities of this province.

Over the past five and a half years, the Mike Harris government has taken great strides to ensure that Ontarians can not only be safe but feel safe.

We know there is still a great deal more that need be done. That is why our government will introduce further measures to enhance victims' rights and keep Ontario streets and Ontario communities safe from crime. We do this fundamentally to enhance the personal safety and security of the people of this province.

As a government, we are also aware of the broader benefits that come from safe communities and what they offer to economic growth and our quality of life.

Alongside fiscal responsibility and accountability, our government's priority is economic growth and the creation of jobs. Our government's policies have led to more than 822,000 net new jobs. More than 578,000 people have escaped welfare. And in the last two years, Ontario's economy has outperformed that of any other nation in the G7.

Businesses are expanding and they are fuelling greater investment throughout this province. But business people want their employees to be safe. They want to lock the door of their premises at night and know that all will be as they left it the next morning. Businesses must feel safe and secure in their daily operations in order to prosper and grow.

Business growth and the resulting economic development is absolutely vital to Ontario's continued success, for it is through its strong economy and new jobs that Ontarians gain hope, opportunity and prosperity. It is through a strong economy that government can support the services that mean so much to the people of this great province, like quality health care and excellence in education.

A safe Ontario is indeed a strong, growing and competitive Ontario. Our government will continue to make the tough decisions needed to keep this province on the right track. We will make the right choices to keep our communities, our streets, our people safe.

We will also ensure that victims' rights are respected throughout. That is why my first announcement today is that the government will introduce legislation to help protect children caught in the misery of prostitution.



Our children are our future. Our responsibility includes caring for them and helping them grow into healthy, contributing adults. Protecting them from danger is our obligation. There should be no doubt that protecting them from sexual exploitation must be a priority. We all react with horror when we hear or read of children being forced into prostitution, some as young as age 12. These young people are the victims of pimps, the victims of johns and other sexual predators who are engaging in a form of child sexual abuse. We must help them and we will help them.

Ontario's police and child care workers need more tools. They have said so. They need more tools to help these sexually exploited children and to protect them from further victimization. Through legislation, our government intends to provide these tools. We intend to help those most vulnerable begin a new life and protect them from the predators I mentioned earlier. Our government will always, always move to protect and to nurture the young people of this province.

Our government also intends to help victims of organized crime. My second announcement today: the government will introduce 21st-century solutions, ranging from civil tools to vigorous crown prosecutions, to respond to the modern challenges presented by organized crime.

Organized crime is indeed a significant problem. It is estimated that it costs the Canadian economy between \$5 billion and \$9 billion—that's billion dollars—each and every year. And organized crime is becoming increasingly sophisticated, using new technologies and new strategies to take advantage of every opportunity they can to make more and more money illegally.

Every day, crime victimizes honest, hard-working people across this province. That victimization takes place directly, by defrauding them of their hard-earned money, and indirectly, through higher consumer prices and service fees. It jeopardizes the safety and economic security of this great province. We need 21st-century solutions to fight it.

Already our government has allocated \$4 million for the strategic deployment of specialized police forces and dedicated legal resources to focus on organized crime. Earlier today I introduced legislation that, if passed by this Legislature, would disrupt these organizations and return their unlawful profits to the very people they have victimized whenever possible. And we plan to create a strike force of investigators, civil lawyers and forensic accountants to ensure that these civil cases are vigorously pursued in court.

Our government aims to help people who have been victimized by organized crime and any other unlawful activity. We aim to take the profit out of crime and to keep Ontario's communities safe.

Another criminal activity that is of great concern to this government—and it's particularly disturbing, I'm sure, to all members in this Legislature—is the rise in violent youth crime. Our government has consistently expressed a strong concern about Ottawa's need to create young offender legislation that provides meaningful

consequences for violent crimes. We do not, and I emphasize "do not," believe that the reintroduced federal legislation is adequate. In fact, it is woefully inadequate to deter violent youth crime or hold young people accountable for their conduct.

With this concern in mind, today I am announcing that the Crime Control Commission will consult on a variety of topics, including how sentencing and release policies affect repeat offenders, the impact of the federal young offenders law, opportunities to reduce crime through early intervention and finally, Mr Speaker, plans to address the very, very real concern that landlords and tenants have when they discover that a neighbouring tenant is engaged in illegal drug activities on the premises. We recognize the seriousness of this matter. I note that there is already an eviction process in place for drug dealers, but we are going to move to streamline the eviction of tenants who are conducting illegal drug activities. We intend to make that process even faster. All tenants should know that they are safe within their own homes.

Mr Speaker, these actions that I have announced today and that my colleagues will announce in a few moments will help ensure that victims' rights are enhanced throughout this province. They will help ensure that Ontario's streets and communities are safe. Our government will work hard toward a safe and prosperous Ontario for the benefit of all of the people in this great province.

1400

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** I am pleased to join my colleagues the Attorney General, the Minister of Correctional Services and the Minister of Citizenship in outlining some of the actions the Mike Harris government is taking to ensure safe streets and safe communities.

Ontario families have a right to feel safe and secure in their communities. Since 1995 our government has made it clear where we stand. We're putting more police on the streets, we've increased support for victims of crime and we're cracking down on criminals. Let me remind you of some of the actions the Ministry of the Solicitor General has taken to ensure safe communities.

To make our streets safer, we have increased penalties for criminals who endanger the public by recklessly fleeing police.

To remove dangerous weapons from the streets and reduce confrontations with police, we've banned the sale of convertible starter pistols and placed strict limitations on the purchase, sale and transfer of imitation firearms.

To increase police visibility in the community, we've introduced the community policing partnership program. Under this program, we have allocated funding for 1,000 net new front-line police officers in communities right across Ontario.

Last week, to improve community safety and protect some of the most vulnerable members of society, we proclaimed Christopher's Law, creating Canada's first and only sex offender registry.

There are many more examples that I could cite: the work of the Ontario Provincial Police in combatting organized crime and outlaw biker gangs; or the office of the fire marshal's efforts to promote home fire safety; or Emergency Measures Ontario and its work in helping communities with disaster planning and preparation.

We've made significant progress but there's much more to be done. That's why today I am pleased to announce that we are meeting the commitments made in the throne speech and moving forward with two important initiatives.

In Ontario, we believe that young people should respect the law and the rights of others. We know the actions of violent young offenders have profound and long-lasting consequences for victims, families and communities. That's why we introduced strict discipline programs for young offenders. In Ontario, young people who break the law get a sharp lesson in the consequences, and we're turning many lives around as a result. Even though our positive efforts dealing with youth crime have been undercut by the inaction of the federal government, we are determined to do what we can at the provincial level to create safer communities and deter crimes committed by young people. That's why the government will implement a comprehensive youth justice strategy to help turn young offenders into responsible, law-abiding citizens.

Domestic violence is not tolerated in Ontario. All too often domestic violence against past or present partners escalates to deadly levels. To counter this, we have taken important action by creating the largest domestic violence court program of its kind in Canada, and we've expanded assistance to domestic violence victims and programs. We need to continue these efforts.

As we said in the Blueprint, victims and support workers in women's shelters need instant access to information about court dates. As well, support workers in women's shelters should be able to take a victim impact statement, or a record of a victim's concerns for their safety, and send it instantaneously into a prosecutor's case file. When bail conditions and restraining orders are imposed on domestic violence offenders, every police service in Ontario should have this information at their fingertips. To achieve these improvements, the government will link all shelters and rape crisis centres to the information technology of Ontario's justice system.

We should be able to walk in our neighbourhoods, live in our homes and send our children to school free from the fear of criminals.

With the initiatives announced today by my colleagues and I, we're continuing to make community safety a top priority. We are demonstrating our commitment to ensuring that public safety and the rights of law-abiding citizens come first.

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** Community safety is critical to our lives here in Ontario, and it's a critical component of our 21-step action plan. The Ministry of Correctional Services has begun the challenging process of replacing a system that

was for years neglected by previous governments. Through our infrastructure renewal program, we are replacing aging jails, some of which were built before this country became a country, with new ultra-modern institutions that will offer better results and better safety and security for the public and for the staff who are working in them.

We have implemented a zero tolerance policy for violence against correctional staff, a prisoner work program and the very successful Camp Turnaround, that has shown that strict discipline works.

We have listened to the people of Ontario who want safe streets and safe communities. We must now build upon these results so that Ontario can stay the right and safe course that it's now on.

Today I am announcing that the successful strict discipline program will be extended to adult offenders and young offenders. Our made-in-Ontario program works, and we must do more of it.

I'm also pleased to announce that we will introduce legislation that will permit victims to participate in parole hearings for those who have wronged them. The people of Ontario have consistently told us that there must be a better balance between the rights of victims and those who offend them. Victims have repeatedly asked for greater participation in the parole process so that there is a clear understanding of not only the effect of the crime on their lives, but also their fears and concerns about the release of those who have harmed them. It's clear, and I am certain everyone in this House will agree, that a victim's suffering does not end on the day that a crime is committed.

Accountability, growth and fiscal responsibility—together, these are the hallmarks of this government. As such, our ministry will continue to embrace these responsibilities as we meet the challenges of transforming a correctional system that has been ignored by previous governments. We will make the tough decisions, the right-things-to-do decisions, in order to better protect and serve the citizens of Ontario. They have that right, and we intend to respect it.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** I'm pleased today to rise in support of this government's efforts to keep Ontario on a prosperous course. Building prosperity is all about seizing opportunity. A society that cherishes and promotes equal access to opportunity for its citizens is a society that will ultimately prosper.

Our government has a strong record of supporting measures that improve opportunities for people in this province. Since 1995, our government has introduced more than \$800 million worth of new programs and spent close to \$6 billion each year to expand opportunities for people with disabilities. We intend to sustain that effort.

The foundation for equal opportunity in this province is the Ontario Human Rights Code. But effective safe-



guarding of our right to live free from discrimination requires the presence of an effective rights guardian.

When this government was first elected six years ago, the Ontario Human Rights Commission was not an effective guardian. Waiting lists were too long and people waited for their outcomes. This government recognized the problem and committed to improving effective enforcement of the code. As a result, the Ontario Human Rights Commission has made significant changes, among them a new state-of-the-art case management system, a centralized, one-window service for inquiry and intake and a highly successful mediation service, improvements that are yielding excellent, expedient results. In 1995, when this government was elected, the average age of an open case was 15 months. Today it is less than 10.

To further remedy the situation, we appointed a new chair of the commission, with a mandate to overcome these issues and move the commission toward a new level of excellence in the service of the people of Ontario. I am proud to report that our efforts have been successful. The caseload is in hand, resolutions are being reached in a more timely fashion and the commission is able to turn more of its resources to pursuing systemic issues of discrimination in Ontario. The system is working better all the time.

1410

The Ontario Human Rights Commission is a strong foundation for equal opportunity in Ontario and sets one of the highest standards in all of Canada. But we know there is much more that we can be doing. The government recognizes that the Ontario Human Rights Commission plays a vital and ongoing role in protecting the rights of many in our society, including Ontarians living with disabilities. The government will continue to support the commission's efforts to ensure fair treatment and equal access to opportunity for citizens with disabilities and others whose rights it protects. As I said, the code is the foundation of equal opportunity in Ontario. Strengthening the code therefore will allow us to build upon the foundation to protect the rights and the dignity of society's most vulnerable members.

The chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission has proposed legislative changes that will allow human rights to be protected more effectively and more efficiently. Based on a review of his recommendations, amendments to the Ontario Human Rights Code will be placed before the House.

In March 1999, as Minister of Long-Term Care with responsibility for seniors, I was pleased to make two announcements regarding the tragic issue of elder abuse. The first was our government's commitment to developing a comprehensive provincial strategy to combat elder abuse. The second was the formation of a round table to help us develop this leading-edge strategy.

When I recently took on responsibilities for seniors again as Minister of Citizenship, I asked the round table to finalize its work immediately. Today I am pleased to report the findings are complete.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. There are responses but I remind the other side we'll go right to zero for you as well then.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** A tired old re-announcement from a tired old government with no new ideas that's out of gas. Did you prorogue the House, have a cabinet shuffle and kill the bills so that new ministers can introduce old bills? Is that the point of this entire exercise?

I thought we were going to get something new today. "The government will introduce legislation to protect children caught in the misery of prostitution." Rick Bartolucci introduced those bills three years ago.

The government's going to reintroduce, reannounce and then kill the bill and reintroduce the organized crime bill. How many times can this government bring this bill back to the Legislature after killing it?

Is there anything from the Office for Victims of Crime in this statement, anything about the 71 recommendations in *A Voice for Victims*, victims of crime? Anything in this? No. Provincial victim service standards for victims: are we finally going to get them in Ontario? No. Do they at least proclaim the victims' rights amendment act so the office for victims' rights can use their statutory powers? No, didn't do that. Did they at least proclaim the Domestic Violence Protection Act so that the small minority of victims of domestic violence could in fact avail themselves of the few provisions in there? No, they didn't do that. Are they going to introduce the Baldwin committee recommendations so that victims of domestic violence can actually get some service from this government? No. Are victims of date rape in this province finally going to get the ability to go to a hospital or to their doctor and find out whether or not they've had a date rape drug slipped into their body? No. Anything about the five-point plan to recoup the cost of gun violence in the province of Ontario? No. Are we going to join the five other provinces in this country which already have mandatory victims' rights legislation? No.

When it comes to victims' rights, this government is all talk, all prop, all reannouncement and no action.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** I'm amazed that this minister can keep a straight face while reading this document. For six years now, this government has committed to an ODA. It keeps giving lip service. The Ontario Human Rights Commission is not even close to an ODA. The human rights commission can deal with one complaint at a time. There are 1.5 million Ontarians with disabilities. Do the math. There is no way the human rights commission can even begin to address the concerns.

Live up to your commitment. Live up to your promise. Do an ODA in place by November 23. Take some time.

There are others in your party, Minister, who are out of the Legislature for days and months. Take some of your time and meet and consult with the Ontarians with disabilities. Live up to your commitment and your promise that all citizens in Ontario will be equal. No more smoke and mirrors; we need a meaningful, effective act in place now, as you voted for and your party committed to.

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** The Minister of Correctional Services wants us to believe that something new is happening. This minister who talks the talk about rehabilitation programs has yet to plan for all of these new rehabilitation programs.

He is closing Burtch Correctional Centre in Brant, which was one of the homes of the most extensive and successful rehabilitation programs in the province; as a matter of fact, so much so that in 1988 it was deemed the best program in Ontario, and he is closing it. Why? His government is gutting it because they need to make room for private enterprise in correctional services. They're going to privatize these programs for rehabilitative services that have been the best in the province and, as a matter of fact, were watched across the world.

Let's find out about the boot camps. Are they successful? Absolutely not. Three studies—one in the United States Congress, one an international study and one in the city of Toronto—said that boot camps were the number one reason why failure took place in dealing with youth justice issues.

Let me tell you something else about boot camps. This is coming from the minister who, for no good reason, as told by the Provincial Auditor, hands over \$400,000 extra to hold up Camp Run Amok and make it successful, along with the fact that another \$25,000 was found by the auditor—the government didn't even know there were bills to be paid and had to pay an extra \$25,000. So much for private enterprise being able to run our system.

I need to finish off with one point, to make an announcement. The people of Ontario are going to be on the hook for hundreds, and maybe millions, of dollars because under this particular government, inmates charged with serious offences, who were spending weekends in jail, went home and served their sentences in their living rooms because they closed the beds in our province's jails.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The member's time is up.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Clearly, New Democrats are going to enthusiastically support any and all efforts that meaningfully and effectively combat crime, but I want to make it quite clear, as we did during committee hearings on this very same bill that was introduced today, that the fight against crime does not include an attack on innocent people here in Ontario.

This government's legislation, which is simply a rewrite of the legislation they killed, of their own accord,

as a result of proroguing, is so broad in scope and has such a low standard of proof for what is effectively the proof of criminal offences that it runs the risk of putting innocent Ontarians at great risk and at peril of being subjected to investigation and to confiscation and forfeiture of their property.

New Democrats will not participate in the creation of the foundation of what many, in response to this very legislation, have called the cornerstone of a police state. Let us make that very clear, and we are unequivocal in that regard.

We were there when the government wanted to pass Christopher's Law. In fact, we moved amendments. New Democrats wanted to amend Christopher's Law to make it tougher, to make it broader in scope, to ensure that every sexual offender in this province—adult and young offender—was included on that registry. The government defeated those amendments. New Democrats wanted to make Christopher's Law more effective; the government dug in its heels and said no.

New Democrats wanted to make the laws that involve the impounding and seizure of cars of suspended drunk drivers tougher and more meaningful. We passed amendments in committee to make that law more effective and more meaningful. The government dug in its heels and said no to making that law tougher.

New Democrats question this government's seriousness and sincerity when it comes to really fighting crime. This government does not have much of a track record. In fact, when its corporate environmental offender friends commit crimes, this government has shown incredible largesse. We heard remarkable testimony from one of the government's own provincial environmental ministry investigators who testified last week at the Walkerton inquiry that effective in 1995, investigators in the Ministry of the Environment were told effectively "Hands off" when it comes to the corporate environmental offenders, the corporate environmental criminals, the buddies of Harris and this government.

This government wants to talk a tough game on crime and on fighting crime. When it comes down to the real offenders and real measures, it wants to turn an equally blind eye.

### 1420

This government wants to talk about resolving outstanding issues. We'll raise once again your Victims' Bill of Rights, which was torn to shreds by Mr Justice Day here in the province of Ontario, who made it very clear that your Victims' Bill of Rights contains no rights and that in fact it would have to be rewritten. The Premier of this province promised before the last election that it would be rewritten. Another promise made, another promise broken, because we've survived now with but the remnants of a Victims' Bill of Rights that has no teeth, that has absolutely no enforceability.

You want to make women safer in this province, Premier? I tell you right now, New Democrats call for an immediate expansion of the assaulted women's hotline so that every woman in Ontario has access to that hotline.



You're going to make women safer by doing that, not by your platitudes here in this Legislature. You want to make women safer and make women feel safer in this province? You want to protect women from violent assault and from murders here in Ontario? Then give effect to the cross-sectoral strategy you've been presented with now in excess of not only months but years, which you've ignored and showed nothing but disdain for.

You want women to feel safer and you want women to be safer here in Ontario? You want to protect women from violent and vicious assault and from murders? Then restore the support for shelters and for second-stage housing here in Ontario.

You talk a big game about law and order and protecting the most vulnerable people in this province. After five years you still couldn't clean up the mess you made of the Family Responsibility Office, the family support plan that has left women and kids hungry year after year since your destruction of the nine regional offices in 1996. Rather than solve the problem, you've acknowledged your disinterest in addressing the problem by the Ministry of the Attorney General sloughing that off to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, where there'll be no relief for those women and children who are victims, not of criminals outside this Legislature but victims of this government.

This government better start looking at some of the real perpetrators of crime. I tell you, Premier, you and your colleagues are as guilty and as culpable as any biker, as any mobster, could be.

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wish to seek unanimous consent of the House to give the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane an opportunity to apologize to the House for the regrettable statement he made yesterday afternoon during members' statements.

**The Speaker:** People will know the member can stand on his own point of order. I will say I have had the chance to review the transcript. While we don't go back a day later, I can tell you that if I had heard the comment, I would have made him withdraw it, as I did earlier in his statement.

As you know, we have a lot of school kids who come here and listen. I'm going to be very quick to jump up on comments that are out of order. The member can stand up on his own point of order, if he wishes to withdraw it, but in future I will be very quick and listen very intently, as will the table, because as you know, sometimes you're listening to the statement or the question and someone else will yell something out. Between all of us, we're going to be able to catch people.

I can say this very clearly: we're not going to let this place degenerate. I'm going to move very quickly. I thank the member for his point of order.

**Mr Kormos:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I served you notice of my intention to rise on a point of privilege. I gave you the details of that point of privilege. I spoke specifically about the PC logo being advertised

on doorways and windows in this building, the stylized, commercial, Conservative Party logo attached to windows, specifically in the north wing entrance—very partisan advertising.

I also raised with you, Mr Speaker, the matter of the lanyards being used, I'm told by Progressive Conservative political staff, which are not the Legislative Assembly issue lanyards, but indeed are lanyards that display and advertise not only the PC logo, but the PC Web site. It's our submission, as New Democrats here, that that sort of partisan utilization of Legislative Assembly property and Legislative Assembly turf is contrary, that partisan propaganda here in the building is contrary to the oft-repeated guidelines issued by you and previous Speakers.

**The Speaker:** To the member, I received the point of privilege and I had a chance to read it. The member has not made out a prima facie case of contempt. However, I'm pleased to tell him that we have removed the crests he talks about.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Yes, it has been removed. Also, we will be looking at the circumstances surrounding the medals.

I thank him for bringing the case to me. While it didn't relate to a prima facie contempt in here, it did in fact trouble me very much, so we have copies of what was left of the crest here and they have been removed. I thank the member for his attention.

The member for Timiskaming-Cochrane.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity the government member has allowed me. I am going to address that very issue in a question I'm going to pose to the Premier in question period.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My colleague did ask for unanimous consent for the member to actually apologize for the comments, not ask a question of the Premier—

**The Speaker:** No. On a point of order, what I ruled is he can get up on his own to do that, and that's what the ruling is going to be.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent of the House to allow the Premier to apologize for not attending question period for 133 days.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** OK, folks, if you want to fool around, I'm going to act very quickly. We're not going to put up with that baloney in here today. I'm going to move very quickly.

The member for Durham on a point of order.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Mr Speaker, I do respect that. I rose yesterday on a point of order addressing the unacceptable parliamentary language from the member from Cochrane—

**The Speaker:** Member take his seat. I have ruled on that. Any member can come up and correct the record.

I've ruled on that. Very simply, had I heard it, he would have been made to withdraw it. I didn't hear it at the time. The ruling is very clear. The member says he is going to address it, and that's my ruling. That's my ruling. No more point of order from the member for Durham. Take your seat. That's the ruling.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOLF TOURNAMENTS

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. We on this side of the House believe it is our job to look out for the interests of our working families and to help them with the challenges that are simply too big for them to tackle on their own.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Would the member take his seat. Stop the clock. Minister of Labour, please withdraw that comment. I did hear it. You're close enough that I did hear that one. Please withdraw it.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I'll withdraw it. He was slandering people, is what I said.

**The Speaker:** You cannot say that in here. I'm asking you to withdraw it.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. I again tell you, there will be nobody left in here if we start up with that baloney in here. We're not going to turn this place into a circus.

The leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, we believe we should be looking out for the interests of our working families. You clearly believe that you should be looking out for the interests of your friends.

We now know that your friends set up a shell company so they could obtain taxpayers' money. They used that money to set up golf tournaments for profit, and you haven't done a thing about it. In fact, you haven't even said that it's wrong. Premier, why do you continue to look after your friends and ignore the interests of Ontario's hard-working families?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** First of all, let me say that I think it is a sad day in the province of Ontario when entrepreneurs—outstanding, respected businesspeople from all across northern Ontario who follow all the rules—are subjected to criticism just because they live in northern Ontario or they live in North Bay or they happen to know the local MPP or they happen to know the Premier of the province of Ontario.

Let me just say that the northern Ontario heritage fund, when we took office, used to fund golf courses directly. I can recall a \$140,000 grant for the Haileybury Golf Club and a \$115,000 grant to the New Liskeard Golf Club, both in the riding of the member who took exception yesterday to government money going into

golf. We stopped the funding directly to either non-profit or for-profit golf courses.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you can characterize this whatever way you want, but what's really important is how Ontario's working families see it. They see it as you, one more time, looking out for the interests of your friends and ignoring their unmet needs. That's how they see it.

Golf is about putting together a foursome and trying to score. That is not what government is all about. Government is about looking out for the needs of Ontario's hard-working families.

1430

Your friends have tricked the people of Ontario out of hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars. They claim they had a non-profit company when that was really just a front for a profit-making scheme. You haven't shut this down, Premier. You haven't even said this was wrong. So I ask you again, why do you look out for your friends and ignore the needs of our hard-working families?

**Hon Mr Harris:** As I indicated, we stopped the direct grants to businesses or ski hills or golf courses that the former government used to be involved in, and we set up the northern Ontario heritage fund, by people in the north, to set their own criteria, to set their own mandate. Part of that is promotion of tourism. Part of that is promotion of events that will get national or international attention: for example, \$100,000 from the heritage fund for the Scott Tournament of Hearts in Sudbury; for example, just under \$100,000 to promote the first ever Ontario Open championship in Sault Ste Marie.

Now, I didn't hear any complaints from the members of either party when the northern Ontario heritage fund promoted these events for Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury. For some reason or other, when the event moved to North Bay—or now, this year, as it'll be in Thunder Bay, I presume Thunder Bay will be OK; Sudbury will be OK in 2002.

The fact of the matter is that the heritage fund is mandated by people in the north. This project followed all the rules and it has led—

**The Speaker:** Order. The Premier's time is up. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, nobody here is talking about the Scott Tournament of Hearts. We're talking about your friends. We're talking about a shell corporation. We're talking about using taxpayer dollars for for-profit purposes. That's what we're talking about here.

This is wrong, Premier. It's wrong to continually put the interests of your friends ahead of the needs of our working families, and yet you do it time and time again. When your friends want you to be there for sweetheart land deals or to run roughshod over environmental regulations or when you yourself wanted a 42% pay hike, you were there in a flash. But you're not there, Premier, you're not there for our working families. You're not there for our working families who are sick and tired of the chaos in our schools, who are frightened by the



damage you've caused to their health care and who are angry that you refuse to protect their air and their water.

Once more, Premier, why is it you devote so much of your time and so much of your energy to looking out for the interests of your friends and you continually ignore the needs of our working families?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I don't know why the Liberal Party is so against northern Ontario, why it's so against northern Ontario being able to broaden its image. I don't know why you think that quality of life is only available in southern Ontario.

Here is a goal in Ontario: to capitalize on the fastest-growing sport that there is, quite frankly, in North America. With all our 800 golf courses, with the hundreds of millions of dollars invested, we're not getting the same advantage that PEI is or Nova Scotia is as a destination. The northern Ontario heritage fund, with very modest amounts of money, far less than you used to give directly to the golf courses and other companies in northern Ontario, decided to promote golf in northern Ontario as an attraction, as a destination, as a tourism attraction, as a promotion. That was their decision and they've made far better investments than you people did with all the money you gave away.

#### CLASS SIZE

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. The only promotion that's going on in northern Ontario these days, Premier, is the promotion of your friends by you. While you've been playing golf in Florida and while your playing partners have been getting the taxpayers to pick up the tab for their greens fees, we on this side of the House have been working very hard on behalf of Ontario's working families. In fact, we put forward a number of positive ideas to help out our working families.

I'm challenging you today, Premier, to take just one of those ideas and make it happen now. We believe that there should be a real cap on class sizes in the early grades. We believe that there should be no more than 20 students from JK through to grade 3.

Premier, will you do that or will you continue to put the interests of your friends ahead of the interests of our working families?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I'd ask the Minister of Education to respond, Mr Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. The government House leader.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, through you to the honourable member re the question—

**The Speaker:** I apologize. I had the clock stopped. I thought you were doing a point of order. That was my fault. Go ahead, government House leader.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. If the honourable members across the way would be quiet, I could answer the question.

The Leader of the Opposition has put forward what he calls his plan, but let's be very clear what it is. Let's be very clear. He is talking about watering down the strict high standards in our curriculum. He is talking about not testing students to make sure they can actually learn the new curriculum.

In the legislation his party is opposing, he's talking about taking away the very protections that make sure school boards are meeting class size rules, protecting special education money, protecting classroom money. His party has taken a position against that. That's not the plan for our students in this province.

**Mr McGuinty:** It's the first time I've seen a golf pro ask the caddy to take a shot for him.

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. Government House leader.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With respect, I would like to ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw personal comments—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. Member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, last warning. You're out of here if you do that again. We're going to pick out people and we're going to throw them out. If you want to carry on like that, you'll all be gone. Toronto Centre-Rosedale, last warning today for you.

Was that answering the question or a point of order?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** It's a point of personal privilege, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** You've got the labour minister behind you shouting about being out of order, and so I looked over there. I assumed that's why you're up. Are you answering the question or is this a point of order?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** It's a point of personal privilege, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Point of personal privilege, government House leader.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Mr Speaker, I was just asking the honourable member to withdraw a comment that I found personally offensive.

**The Speaker:** He did not say as the Minister of Labour did, where he accused somebody of slandering. You know what is parliamentary in here. What he did here was just make a reference.

The leader of the official opposition for the continuation of the question.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, welcome back to the job. Now, do your job and take my question.

We know, Premier, that your friends don't support my plan. They don't want us to take just 10 cents out of every dollar you've committed to tax cuts and they don't want us to invest that in making smaller classes so our children can get better learning and then later on get the best jobs. Why is it that you continue to put the interests of your friends ahead of the needs of our working families?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I would like to ask the honourable member why he is putting the interests of the teacher unions above the interests of kids. His plan is saying,

"Let's solve all of our problems by decreasing the teacher workload," by increasing the student workload yet again to decrease the teacher workload. Yes, we need resolutions to challenges. That is not helping our students.

**Mr McGuinty:** Working families now get it. They understand. They know you're not looking out for their interests and that you're very focused on the interests of the well-connected, the wealthy few and your own friends. We know you're not working on behalf of working families. Everybody now knows you're not working on behalf of working families. Instead, you're working on behalf of your special friends.

If that is not true, Premier, if you disagree with any of those statements, then prove it here and now. Put a real cap on class sizes for our children from JK through grade 3, kids between the ages of four and eight years of age. Take just one dime out of every dollar that you want to commit to more tax cuts to benefit your wealthy friends and the well-connected and put that into something that will benefit our working families and make sure our kids get a better job. Will you do that, Premier, or will you continue to go to bat for your wealthy and well-connected friends?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** You know, it's really wonderful. You put these wonderful little things there. You think you just wave a magic wand and they all work. Putting a cap on class size—go out and talk to the people in the sector, because do you know what that will do? First of all, it's going to cost more money than I've seen you ask—you have no idea where you're going to get the money for this. Secondly, what this will do in high-growth communities is increase the number of portables. In case he hasn't visited, one of the challenges your government and the previous NDP government left this government was trying to keep up with growth of students in our communities. Because of the billions of dollars we have put into the education system, we are actually seeing for the first time a decrease in portables; we're seeing our students housed in schools for the first time—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Would the Minister of Education take a seat. Member for Windsor West, this is your last warning too. I was shouting "Order" and you couldn't even hear me or see me, you were shouting so much. This is your last warning as well.

New question.

1440

## COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Yesterday the American Vice-President, Dick Cheney, came to town and he told us about the real electrical energy strategy for North America. He was very blunt. He said that they need to build at least one new electrical power plant a week for the next 20 years, a 43% increase in electrical demand. We know there's no way they'll be able to do that, so

they'll have to get the power from somewhere else. Now your government has said that you're prepared to sell off Ontario's electrical system.

Premier, it's pretty clear that if you privatize our system of hydroelectricity in this province, the private companies will be only too happy to buy it up, but they'll want to sell the power in the United States. Whose side are you on? Are you going to maintain a public system so that Ontario people can benefit, or are you going to privatize it so that the electricity can be sold in the United States? Which is it?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Certainly first and foremost our concern is that we have guaranteed access here in the province of Ontario, not only to affordable but also an adequate supply of electricity. So every initiative we've taken has been to ensure that and encourage that now and into the future.

It's interesting that you mention Mr Cheney, and it's an interesting debate. The Prime Minister of Canada and I have actually talked about this, because he told me that in his meetings with the President of the United States they felt there were great opportunities for more generation, maybe more nuclear plants, more Candu reactors here in Canada, here in Ontario, and if the federal government was interested, would the provincial government be interested, guaranteeing that obviously we'd look after Canadians' needs first, in then perhaps building surplus power—jobs and investment here—to be able to sell to the United States. That's something I think we should look at, and I hope you would support it.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, first of all there is no guarantee. When you start selling off those electrical generating stations, they will want to sell the power where they can get the highest price. For you to then come along and say, "We want you to sell it in Ontario"—that's exactly what California tried to do; it didn't work once it was privatized and deregulated.

Your energy minister says, "There aren't the transmission lines." Mr Cheney was very clear about that: they will build the transmission lines to get our electricity.

They're already paying 123% more in New York now. The choice will be this: once it's privatized and the private companies want to sell it in the United States, Ontario consumers, Ontario industry, will either have to pay double and triple the rates for electricity, or we'll watch our electricity being exported.

Premier, don't you get it? This is critical for Ontario's economy. Electricity makes the new economy run. Are you going to sell it out, or are you going to stand for—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The member's time is up.

**Hon Mr Harris:** What we're going to do is guarantee and ensure that Ontario interests are put first. We have made it very clear that there will be no—you talk about privatization; not even any market opening until we have those conditions in place that will be beneficial to the people and the industries of Ontario. We have had a lot of debate in this Legislature on that. I think there has



been a consensus. I know you have not agreed, but the Power Workers' Union, for example, does agree that a working marketplace with true competition and adequate supply is the best way to do that. So that's our goal and those are the conditions we've set down. That's what we're working toward here in Ontario.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, you keep uttering these words about guarantees for Ontario. There are no guarantees in the legislation. Furthermore, once it's sold to private companies, NAFTA and other trade agreements say that you can't stop that power from going south, that you've opened up the market. That's the reality of this, Premier. For you to utter these things, do you think that corporate energy giants are in the game of charity? Do you think they're going to be willing to sell for a lower price in Ontario when they can get 123% more in New York and when they know the Americans are not interested in conserving, that they're simply interested in getting more electricity, no matter how it comes?

What part of this don't you get? When you open the market, it means they're going to seek the maximum profit, which means the maximum price. There's nothing you can do, once you've sold it off, to protect them. California tried that. It was a disaster. Cancel this now before you sell away what is our most valued commodity in a knowledge economy. Cancel it now.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I think everybody agrees the key is that you must guarantee and ensure supply. That is the number one condition we set down for any deregulation of the market, and an acceptance that as long as you have that supply, then the marketplace will give you better product, better price over the long term. Our first interest is, of course, for Ontario. California, which you mentioned, had alarmists who screamed and yelled, put their heads in the sand, delayed for eight years, and they had no new construction for an eight-year period. Let's not let that happen in Ontario.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Hampton:** My next question is for the Premier. The Premier needs to understand that the demand for electricity is out of sight in the United States, and that's where the problem is.

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Premier, I want to ask you, though, about your experiences on the golf course. We've learned that you've been making taxpayers' money available to you—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The member take his seat. The questions need to relate to the minister's portfolio. As you know, you can't ask—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Take your seat, please. I'm not finished yet. I hope you will get to the point quickly about what the question is.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, we exposed your plan to greatly reduce property taxes for privately owned golf courses in Ontario. Today we find out that not only are

you substantially reducing property taxes to artificially low levels, but you're going to do it right away, even before a recommended property tax assessment review is conducted. At the same time, property taxes are going up by 5% for homeowners in Toronto, 9.5% for homeowners in Brampton and 4.5% for homeowners in Richmond Hill. How do you justify giving your corporate friends who own private golf courses a substantial property tax reduction, while you're increasing property taxes for homeowners?

**Hon Mr Harris:** The first I heard of it was when you raised it yesterday. I'm not aware of any changes that are there. There may be some proposals before the Ministry of Finance. The minister's not here today and I'd be pleased to pass your concerns on to him when he comes back.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, read your backbencher Mr Beaubien's report. He is very clear. He says that the lower tax assessment should be put in place and maintained for these golf courses, even though we know their commercial value is very great.

Premier, here's the gist of the problem: you say these properties are to be assessed at market value, but we know from the formulas that they are very valuable properties. So we want to know, how do you justify this? Who asked for it? We reviewed the finance ministry's proposals. There was nobody asking for it there. We looked at who came and talked to Mr Beaubien. No one was asking for it there. Who's asking for this massive property tax reduction for golfing properties? Because we don't see any taxpayers out there who are asking for such a reduction when their homeowner taxes are going up.

**The Speaker:** The member's time is up.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I've got a whole whack of briefing notes here but none of them reference that, so perhaps you're the only one.

1450

### CABINET OFFICE STAFFING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, I want to raise another example where it's very clear that you've looked out for yourself at the expense of Ontario's working families.

In 1995 the cost of running your political Cabinet Office was \$7.8 million, but according to the audited public accounts, last year those costs doubled to \$15.8 million. Can you tell me how it is, at a time when you're asking our working families to accept less health care, less education, less protection for our environment, you have been able to double the cost of running your cabinet?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate the question. Let me be very clear. In the whole area of my office, the Cabinet Office, political offices, not even taking into account inflation, we have 15% fewer political staff six years after we took office, we have five

fewer ministers and we are budgeting less in this whole area.

It is difficult to compare the Cabinet Office of today and the Cabinet Office of 1995 because of changes that have taken place in the government. Some things that weren't in the Cabinet Office before are in the Cabinet Office today. For example, the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board, which would have been in the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology under previous governments, is in the Cabinet Office. The red tape secretariat, which you guys didn't care about, is a new initiative that has saved companies and businesses millions and millions of dollars in time. So when you compare apples to apples, you'll find we compare very favourably.

**Mr McGuinty:** You're telling me that power really has changed you, Mr Premier. That's what you're telling me. Suddenly now you have two sets of rules, one for working families and another for yourself.

Our hospitals can't afford to hire full-time nurses. Our schools can't afford special education teachers and we can't afford to hire librarians these days. The Ministry of Environment doesn't have enough money to hire back all those water treatment inspectors that you fired. But apparently there is enough money to double the cost of running your cabinet.

To remind viewers, there used to be 130 members sitting in this Legislature. You dropped it to 103. But you have doubled the cost of running your cabinet.

I ask you again, Premier, why is it that you have become suddenly, in government, so adept at looking out for yourself and your friends, but you ignore the needs of our working families?

**Hon Mr Harris:** As I indicated—the member didn't want to hear the facts, I guess—from the 1990s to 1998, more than \$5 million in annual Cabinet Office staffing and accommodation costs were picked up in other ministries. What I'm telling you is that we consolidated and put the costs where they should be, made it transparent and made it up front. Overall, we have fewer political staff and we're spending less money.

But let me say this: the preamble to your supplementary dealt with working families. You voted against every tax cut for working families, some \$5 billion to \$6 billion in the hands of working families. They are paying 40% less today in income taxes, and you voted against every one of them. Why do you have the nerve to stand up and say you care about working families? You voted to take \$6 billion right out of their pockets.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Clearly, all members of this House are concerned about violence against women and want to see action to address this social problem. The government talks about its commitment to the issue but needs to show what services are being provided and what initiatives have been made a priority. We need to know that there are supports in the

community that will help women escape domestic violence. Minister, what priorities has your ministry committed to?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** This government will not tolerate violence against women and their children. We provide a whole series of supports, both on the justice side and through community supports, to provide support to women fleeing abuse.

In last year's budget we announced \$10 million in new support in this area, which amounted to about a 15% increase in community supports provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. We announced \$5 million in funding for an initiative to help provide additional support for transitional supports. I'm pleased to tell the honourable member that one year later, after making that announcement, we have more than 118 transitional support workers providing support to women across the province who have fled abusive partners. So the initiative is well underway and I think providing more support to vulnerable people in our society who need it.

**Mrs Munro:** I'm glad to see the government is interested in supports for abused women. However, we must remember that often children are the tragic witnesses of domestic violence. Government needs to understand that we need to help the entire family as well as the victims themselves. What supports does the government provide to protect these victims?

**Hon Mr Baird:** We want to take measures at the community level to provide support to people fleeing abuse. We also want to take some meaningful measures that will address the root causes of these tragedies in a substantial way.

When it comes to children, I think we're all tremendously concerned, whether it's a young boy or a young girl, that they would somehow view that this is acceptable behaviour, that they would somehow learn that this is something that is normal in Ontario, when it's not. It's not normal and it's not accepted. So in last year's budget we provided an additional \$5 million for intervention programs for child victims of domestic violence. One year after making that financial commitment, this funding is supporting 115 groups across Ontario to deliver counselling services to children who witness violence against women. This, in a meaningful way, is hopefully trying to address the root cause of the challenge that is domestic violence.

#### GOLF TOURNAMENTS

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** I have a question to the Premier. To start, I'd like to say that the personal remarks I made about you yesterday were over the top and I withdraw them. In fact, Premier, I'd like to change my tack totally and I'd like to be your friend, because to be your friend is the only way I could see anybody gets a benefit from the Mike Harris government.



There is evidence that there is a pattern of corruption emerging in your government that benefits your friends. Whether it's your continued promotion of—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Thank you very much. Don't you see me standing up? Am I invisible?

The member will have to withdraw that. You can't say that.

**Mr Ramsay:** I withdraw that, Mr Speaker, and say there's a pattern of behaviour in this government that seems to benefit the Premier's friends.

Whether it's your continued promotion of the Adams mine garbage deal that Peter Minogue, your best friend, is involved in, or the fast-tracking of Peter Minogue's golf course and subdivision in North Bay, or the funneling of heritage fund dollars through a Peter Minogue shell company for a North Bay for-profit company, the pattern is clear. Why is it that your best friend and other friends of yours are so blessed by your government's largesse?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** The member has mentioned three projects, all in the public domain, all there before public scrutiny, all there meeting all the criteria and all the program. I quite frankly find the question offensive. I think of the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars, millions of dollars, given in direct grants by the Liberals to golf courses, to ski hills, to individual businesses, and here you have northern Ontario entrepreneurs bringing forward proposals, whether it's for disposal of garbage or to promote non-traditional sources of tourism to bring northern Ontario into the 21st century. I find it disgraceful that any northern member would object to the kind of promotion, the kinds of programs the northern Ontario heritage fund has been involved in, or indeed the Adams mine proposal, which a number of us have talked about for a great deal of time.

**Mr Ramsay:** Premier, the facts are clear. The northern Ontario heritage fund forbids grants to be awarded to for-profit companies. When a North Bay golf tournament company that you are familiar with ran up against this restriction, they approached Peter Minogue for a way around this hurdle. Again it was a long-time friend of yours and manager of the northern Ontario heritage fund, Royal Poulin, who suggested to Peter Minogue how a non-profit shell company could be established in order to funnel taxpayers' dollars to the for-profit company. Then it was Royal's son, working in the same ministry at the time, who helped facilitate the application for Peter Minogue.

1500

Premier, if this was all on the up and up, then why wouldn't this scheme be published as a guideline for the heritage fund so that all northerners could understand how to access these funds? Why does it appear again and again that it's just your closest friends who profit from the Mike Harris government?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I would hardly call the Scott Tournament of Hearts, North Bay, my friends that are involved. Here are the criteria: private-public partnerships, federal

government, other government-related agencies acting together, municipalities, First Nations, local service boards, not-for-profit corporations.

Funding could be provided to market a sporting event which brings national or international media exposure to northern Ontario, such as the Scott Tournament of Hearts did in Sudbury, such as the Winter Games did, such as the first time we ever had the Ontario Open golf classic. Private-public partnerships are the criteria, such as the funding that came forward to host in Sault Ste Marie when I never heard any objections about a tremendously successful promotion and tournament. These projects met all the criteria. They're out there in front for everybody to see.

You may disagree with trying to promote golf in northern Ontario. That's fair criticism. I don't know how you have the courage to do it when you threw millions of dollars directly into golf courses and other recreational facilities—

**The Speaker:** Order. The Premier's time is up.

#### DEER DAMAGE

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. As he will know, last year we had quite a bit of snow in our area and the deer had a hard problem finding food. A lot of the deer in the Meaford area have moved out of their traditional area and moved into our apple orchards. I have a report here right from the Ministry of Agriculture that says one apple orchard lost over 80% of their trees. Their trees will be dead now. They won't grow; they won't grow anything else.

The ministry seemed to be able to find \$90 million to help out our oilseed people and that's great—that's to be commended—but here I have apple orchards in my area that are almost wiped out. Will the minister, today, help me compensate those apple growers?

**Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I thank the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for the question. My Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Natural Resources have been working with respect to the deer damage and, as a result of that, the Ministry of Natural Resources has consulted with apple growers who are affected and has offered some solutions and options that would assist growers in minimizing the impact of the deer population.

The deer damage is not compensated under dedicated programs such as livestock predator damage. However, producers who are enrolled in the NISA program—which is the net income stabilization account program—may be eligible for withdrawal for the 2000 stabilization year. In addition, of course, if the situation warrants it, producers are also eligible to apply for interim withdrawal under NISA for the 2001 stabilization year.

**Mr Murdoch:** That's fine, and most of the apple orchard people belong to NISA, but it won't work this time. Sure, that will compensate them for their livelihood

this year, but, as you mentioned, under the livestock act now, if a wolf came in and killed lambs or killed livestock, they are compensated for that. This is the same thing, only it's nuisance deer that have come in and killed these trees. The people can apply under NISA for this year, but it won't help them buy new trees the same as the livestock act will allow them to buy new lambs or sheep if they're killed by wolves. And in this case, the MNR will not let the landowner protect his trees by shooting them so we have a big problem here that they're unable to control the deer that are killing their trees. And they're killing the trees, not just eating the buds for this year; they're gone forever.

Mr Minister, will you commit today to look at an amendment to the livestock act to include deer in that act? Maybe then we will be able to get some compensation for these farmers.

**Hon Mr Coburn:** As the member knows, we continue to work with our farmers and our producers for long-term solutions, in fact, made-in-Ontario solutions that are enduring and take the peaks and valleys out of some of these challenges. I encourage the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound to work with his constituents who are facing losses to deer damage and contact my ministry, and we'll work with you to provide some assistance on these specific issues.

To answer your question directly, I will take a look at that. We are looking for long-term solutions. One of the caveats is that compensation on an annual basis is not necessarily a long-term solution, but we will work on that with the member.

### NURSES

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Premier. Today, just down the street here, within sight of this building, an amazing event took place. Hospital nurses, front-line nurses, put down their stethoscopes, left their wards and took up picket signs. They held a May Day information picket—mayday, SOS—a warning that hospital nursing is in crisis. In fact, they were wearing buttons that look an awful lot like your highway construction signs, except these say, "Not enough nurses—your tax cuts at work."

Premier, your government has created a crisis in which nurses are undervalued, underpaid and overworked. In an unprecedented way and for the first time in history, they are voluntarily refusing overtime and extra shifts. It's a job action. They're demanding you take real measures to address the issues, the crisis facing nursing, the issues of working conditions and professional pay and the shortage. What is your response to the working hospital nurses of Ontario?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** The Minister of Health can respond.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I can tell the honourable member that in terms of the instant issues of the day, which is ensuring that patients in Ontario receive the critical care they

require in the hospital environment, I have been communicating with the Ontario Hospital Association and have delivered our expectations that they will take the actions that are necessary to maintain patient care today. Obviously, a series of negotiations is going on between the ONA and the OHA.

I can tell you, in terms of our government, we've been very proactive as a response to the nursing task force report back in 1999, investing \$375 million of taxpayers' money annually to create new nursing positions, and we've also been proactive in a number of other areas involving nurses. We welcome nurses in our province and we want to be there for them.

**Ms Lankin:** Well, Minister, let me tell you some other expectations you delivered to the OHA and to the public of Ontario. Your finance minister says Ontario cannot compete with Alberta nurses, who recently received a significant wage increase. He went on to say, and I'm quoting, "If our nurses want to move to Alberta, then so be it." And your Premier said that Ontario's hospital nurses shouldn't be expecting any kind of significant wage increase. This from a government who had a large pay increase for political staff just after the election, who wanted to increase the MPPs' salaries by 42%, who raised wages for doctors, for judges, for government lawyers. What about the nurses, Minister?

Will you tell nurses today that you will not drive any more of them out of the province, that there's a reason for them to stay? Will you tell them that your government will fund hospitals so they can pay nurses professional wages with decent benefits and good working conditions? Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I will say to anyone who wishes to listen that we as a government have been funding this health care system at an accelerating rate, a 19% increase in the health care system over the last two years. It now represents 44 cents out of every program dollar spent in this province.

With respect to nurses, again, our investment of \$375 million annually to create new nursing positions; \$17 million to create new nursing ER positions; \$10 million to create 106 new nurse practitioner positions. These are the elements of action rather than talk, and I would say to any nurse who is willing to listen, we welcome nurses. We want them to be an integral part of our health care delivery system and we are putting our money where our mouth is, which is what they expect out of leadership from our government.

### PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** My question is for the Premier. Last week you managed to make a sit-in look vigorous as you staggered about Ontario with your no-meat, no-juice tour. You waxed hollow about accountability. Today I'd like to give you a chance to actually address a meaningful question about accountability.



I have a private member's bill that establishes a 60% threshold for attendance by the Premier and members of the cabinet in question period. Your lack of commitment to the principle of accountability, as contained in my bill, is a concern. As well, your continued deception around releasing your holiday schedule is at odds with the principles of accountability you like to talk to for everybody else.

Premier, will you commit to the principle of 60% attendance contained in my bill, and will you release your holiday schedule today?

1510

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I was wondering whether you, with all your onerous responsibility in the Legislature, right in your own riding might commit to a little better attendance, it seems to me.

Let me say that my responsibilities are here in the Legislature, with all our ministers. I also have responsibilities in my riding, which is a couple of hundred miles north of the Legislature. I also have responsibilities to all the people of the province.

I can recall that when I sat on the back benches, I can recall that when I was in opposition, it was not nearly as onerous a responsibility or as time-consuming as being a parliamentary assistant, let alone being a minister, let alone being the Premier of the province. My accountability is to you in the Legislature. My accountability is also, though, to the taxpayers, the voters, the citizens, the nurses, the teachers and the child-care workers of this province, and so I make sure that I provide time for them and, quite frankly, they've had a lot better questions for me than you have.

**Mr Smitherman:** Premier, at the rate you're going it won't be long now before those of us on this side will have the opportunity to fulfil those responsibilities you view as onerous.

Sir, a couple of points on this matter: you spoke about your responsibilities in your riding and yet I note that a story in the North Bay Nugget at the end of the session, 133 days ago, spoke about the lack of attendance you have for your own riding. Sir, you spoke about the quality of the questions you received on the road, but I was there in London when you couldn't hurry fast enough back into the comfort of your GMC Suburban, leaving a constituent asking about the health care of his daughter.

Premier, will you commit today to attend question period on a more regular basis, such as the 60% threshold—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The member's time is up. Take his seat. Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** My commitment is to the province of Ontario, to the voters, to the citizens, to all the citizens of Ontario; as I said, to all those who are there. So I certainly commit that I and my ministers will be here and accountable an appropriate amount of time. I also commit to travel the globe to seek out every job, every investment, every opportunity, because ours is a growth agenda. I commit to continue to put the time into the job that the job requires. I visited over 20 communities

before the session started and I took the throne speech to the people of Ontario, but I noticed one little thing: while I was in Sudbury on Friday, we had second and third reading on back-to-work legislation affecting Toronto Centre-Rosedale and you missed both votes.

## YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question is for the Minister of Correctional Services. On March 24 you released the results of an evaluation done on Project Turnaround, the young offenders' strict discipline facility, which was established in my riding in 1997. There were some very promising results that came out of this evaluation with regard to the rate of young offenders re-offending. Minister, can you share with this House the results and what they mean?

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** I'd like to thank the member from Simcoe North for his question. I know he has a very keen and very valid interest in Project Turnaround and the results of that facility, as we as a government do, because we set that project up in 1996 as a pilot project to apply the concept of strict discipline as a correctional model to young offenders. We did that because at the time the recidivism rate, or the rate at which young offenders were going back into society and re-offending after they had left our institutions, was too high: some 60% to 70% to 80%.

### *Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Sampson:** I say to the member opposite, who stood in this House not too many minutes ago and said we should be proud of the correctional system in this province, that he is proud we are sending 50% to 80% of offenders, from our institutions, back into society to reoffend. I think that's a shameful record to be proud of, I say to the honourable member.

We have a project that has demonstrated tremendous success and we're proud of that.

**Mr Dunlop:** Thank you for the response, Minister. I'm very proud of my riding of Simcoe North being host to this facility. It's clear from this report that Project Turnaround is changing the lives of young people to create law-abiding, responsible individuals.

In light of these great results from the privately operated Project Turnaround, can you tell us where the ministry will be expanding the strict discipline program, and whether you are also considering expanding on this very successful partnership with the private sector?

**Hon Mr Sampson:** I thank the honourable member again for the question. I want to continue in the vein of the answer to the first question because I didn't have a chance to answer it as I was interrupted by the people opposite.

What I wanted to say to the members here and to the people watching is that we have a tremendous correctional program in the form of Project Turnaround, where we are able to lower the reoffending rates of young offenders, especially those who are serious and violent offenders, by a third. That's tremendous progress

that we started in 1996, I say to my friends across the floor, that we've monitored since 1996, a program we have modified since 1996 to make sure we get results.

I say to the members opposite, that's how you demonstrate making tough decisions in the right direction in the field of justice and in the field of corrections. You actually do something that demonstrates the result. You don't do what you did, which is sit around and do nothing.

### MEDICAL SCHOOL

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Recently an editorial in the Windsor-Essex media commented on a statement of the Premier and it said, "For many who have been involved in the med school drive"—that is in Windsor-Essex—"the Premier's failure to include Windsor will be seen as a great disappointment. But it wouldn't be unexpected if Windsor is left out in the end."

However, under the headline that read, "Campus coming to Windsor as well, Clement says," you are more positive and are reported to have said, "The Windsor campus likely would be a satellite of the existing medical school at the University of Western Ontario."

In view of your optimistic comments, can the 300,000 residents of the Essex-Windsor area count on your support in establishing a satellite medical school through the University of Western Ontario?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'd be happy to clarify the situation for the honourable member and for this chamber. Certainly we made a very important announcement last Tuesday in which we indicated that we are moving ahead with strategies for physician recruitment and retention which includes a northern medical school.

Just parenthetically, when you have Diane Marleau, the Sudbury MP, saying, "I want us to give credit to Mike Harris and his team for this great decision that was made," that obviously shows bipartisan support, and I know the honourable member was asking the question in the same vein.

With respect to southwestern Ontario, our concern is physician recruitment and retention in urban areas and rural areas. This is not just an urban challenge; it is also a challenge in rural Ontario. Our commitment is to ensure that through our initiative in southwestern Ontario we meet those challenges, and we will do so based on proposals that can now come forward.

**Mr Crozier:** I appreciate that. It was also reported in the Windsor Star recently that, as you have just said, "The government is exploring a satellite as part of a plan to broaden medical care" for the areas of Essex, Kent and Lambton counties.

It is my understanding as well, and I'm pleased about this, that you have agreed to meet with the medical education task force in June. Really, what I am asking you for is just some good news. I hope you will support the establishment of this medical school in Windsor and

that you will bring good news to us in June. Can I count on that?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I thank the honourable member for putting his oar in the water on this and I accept his comments in the positive tone in which they were made.

I can tell the honourable and this House that in fact I'm having a series of meetings in May, not June. This is the month of May and they will occur later on.

The member for Windsor-St Clair has been extremely helpful in providing me with some information about his local community. The member for Windsor West has also been helpful, although I'm less clear about her ultimate position, but that's fine.

I can tell you that I'm willing to meet with any groups that have a position on this issue. Certainly, our position is that if there are proposals that can help solve the physician recruitment and retention issue, both in rural areas and in urban areas in southwestern Ontario, those are the kinds of proposals we're interested in.

1520

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Solicitor General. I really did appreciate—and I'm sure the people of Ontario did, as well—hearing about the entire issue around community safety. In my riding of Durham, residents have been involved for years in establishing a variety of initiatives designed to improve community safety. Such programs as Neighbourhood Watch and road safety programs are just a couple, and they've been coordinated by volunteer citizens like Marianne Winters in Orono, Masood Vatandoust, Nicole Johnson, Lloyd and Susan Johnson of Newcastle and Marianne Yeatman of Bowmanville, just to name a few. They've tried to maintain a sense of community safety.

Minister, would you please tell the House today, and the people, about the Partners Against Crime program and the appropriate grants that will assist communities like mine across this province?

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** The Partners Against Crime program was designed to stimulate the police and community to develop and deliver crime prevention programs and community safety initiatives. Since 1997, 208 communities across Ontario, and community agencies and police services, have received funding of some \$7 million under this program.

There are three components of this program. First is community crime prevention, which allows those closest to community concerns to set local priorities and develop and implement local solutions. Then there is front-line policing crime prevention, which reinvests proceeds of crime money into front-line policing activities. Also, we have law enforcement grants.

**Mr O'Toole:** It's really exciting to hear that 208 communities have already picked up on this government initiative. It's clear evidence that we're certainly keeping our promise of getting tough on crime. I think you as minister serve as a good sentinel for that.



I know the Durham constituents, and indeed all of Ontario, are thirsty to know more about the plan. Can you outline for us today the kinds of community programs that are being funded by you and this government in programs like Partners Against Crime?

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** In fact, you've already mentioned two of them. There's Crime Stoppers and Neighbourhood Watch. In addition to these, there are programs aimed at providing occupational, vocational and academic opportunities for young offenders. There are recreational activities for youth, mentoring programs between police officers and at-risk youth, as well as implementing justice councils. We also have public education and awareness programs under this.

Under front-line policing grants, we provide money to municipal police services and to the OPP for things such as the purchase of stop sticks and spike belts to reduce the duration of police pursuits and to improve safety for police and the public. Also, this has allowed the purchase of laser speed guns and sophisticated breathalyzer equipment to enhance road safety enforcement and drink-and-driving initiatives.

RAIL SERVICE

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** My question is to the Premier. Less than two weeks ago, hundreds of northern residents boarded the Survival Express, bound for Toronto. These were people from my community, the community of the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane and, Premier, people from your community of North Bay. All these hundreds of people had one message, and it was loud and clear: don't kill our communities, don't kill our trains. Premier, it's time you listened to the people of the north. Will you do that?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Yes.

**Mr Bisson:** Can I take that to say you will stand with the people who came down on the Survival Express and you will reinstate and make sure the monies necessary to the ONTC are there, that the ONTC stays under public control and that rail passenger service in fact stays under public control and keeps rolling in northern Ontario?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I was asked, will I listen to the people of the north? That's what I've been doing for 20 years, as an MPP, as a cabinet minister, as somebody in opposition, as leader of a party in opposition and as Premier of the province. When it comes to the ONTC, we made a very firm commitment: we were not getting good service, and we needed to take a good, sound look at the ONTC to see if we could not improve overall service—freight, passenger service, bus service and telecommunications. We would take a look and examine all proposals to do that. That was the recommendation of the consultants who were hired. That was adopted unanimously by the board of directors, all from northern Ontario, and accepted by the government. The minister, the ministry and the board are now empowered to talk to all those interested, including the mayors and reeves,

those who came to Queen's Park and those in the private sector, to see what we can do—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the Premier's time is up.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** For the first time since December 20, 2000, I have a chance to ask a question of the Premier—some 133 days since I've had that opportunity.

I want to ask him this question: in the Niagara Peninsula he may be aware, as his own members and other members would be, that there is a tremendous shortage of ophthalmologists, so that people who are seeking eye care in the Niagara region are either forced to go to Hamilton, where they're already backed up with a long list for that service, or they have to wait an inordinately long period of time to receive eye care.

In other parts of the province where there isn't a sufficient number of ophthalmologists, the Minister of Health has permitted a temporary lifting of the billing cap. Until such time as we have a sufficient number in the Niagara region, will you now, today, treat the people of the Niagara region the way others have been treated in the province and lift that billing cap on an interim basis so that people in the Niagara region may receive adequate eye care?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate the member's concern, and I will be pleased to pass that concern on to the minister.

**Mr Bradley:** My supplementary question to the Premier also revolves around the need for medical care in the Niagara region. The Premier would be aware that in many parts of the province, again including St Catharines and the Niagara Peninsula, there happens to be a real shortage of family physicians. We also have that in the field of those who deal with skin problems that people have—dermatologists, that is—but we have a dearth of family physicians in the Niagara region. People are calling the constituency offices of the members there to try to obtain the services of a physician, and we find instead that we're having people who are retiring, people who are passing on and people who are moving. Therefore we have a genuine crisis in the field of medical care because people do not have the services of a family physician.

The Premier would know that his government has an opportunity to take action which would overcome this problem in the Niagara region—in particular in the city of St Catharines, where I'm getting the calls, but throughout the Niagara region. I ask the Premier in the House today, will he undertake to provide programs which would in the very near future bring to the Niagara Peninsula, to the city of St Catharines, family physicians who can then serve the people in our area?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I think the minister can respond to that.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the member for his concern about this particular issue. Indeed, as part of our overall strategy on physician recruitment and retention to respond to the McKendry report as well as other things, we have put provincial resources into rural premiums for GPs who are on call, we have a specific rural recruitment and retention program for underserved areas that have that designation, we are enhancing on-call coverage, we are trying to get specialist hospital on-call coverage improved as well, we have an incentive funding program for rural students who take a clerkship rotation. These are all things we have done to date. Is there more to do? Yes, there is, and that is why we made our announcements last week. But if the honourable member has any particular issues, certainly I'd be happy to take them under advisement.

1530

## PETITIONS

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario plans to build a new high school in Cornwall to provide accommodations for 300 students at the taxpayers' cost of over \$9 million;

"Whereas the Upper Canada District School Board currently has 700 excess pupil spaces in the high school level in Cornwall and is looking at filling these spaces with grade 7 and 8 students, necessitating an elementary school closure;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Please urge these coterminous boards to share the facilities that exist. Due to a previous collaboration effort, these boards presently share space in one high school. This has been a harmonious, cost-effective union. We request that the government of Ontario urge the continuation of co-operation of these boards to avoid unnecessary spending of tax dollars. Without this co-operation, we face sending our young children into high schools at an early age simply to fill space, while a coterminous board spends upwards of \$9 million to build yet another facility."

This petition is signed by Terri Forrester, Shirley Ferguson and 1,600 of my other constituents, and I affix my signature to this petition.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas the community of Sarnia is witnessing many women developing mesothelioma and asbestosis as

a result of the asbestos brought home on their husbands' work clothing; and

"Whereas similar cases are occurring in other areas of the province;

"We, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to allow compensation for family members who develop occupational illness as a result of workplace toxins inadvertently brought home."

I add my name to those of the petitioners.

### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 112 people:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

### WHITE BIRCH PLANT

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** I'd like to acknowledge the presence of 30 of my constituents, who have come from Temagami to hear the reading of this petition. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources has chosen to deny a recent bid to have a value-added white birch plant in Temagami;

"Whereas the province of Ontario is systematically stripping away the economic backbone of Temagami through policy and practices that resulted in the closures of the Milnes and Son mill and the MNR district office and now the outright rejection of a viable business opportunity;

"Now, therefore, on behalf of the residents of Temagami, and in particular the approximately 50 families which have put their lives on hold while their breadwinners travel out of town to find gainful employment, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide a wood directive in order to enable Temagami to have a value-added white birch plant in Temagami, thus creating enough jobs to allow this town to survive."

I will add my signature to this petition.



## DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I've got quite a number of petitions from many concerned citizens.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the report of the McKendry commission, released by the Ontario Ministry of Health in December 1999, finds that Ontario is facing a shortage of over 1,000 physicians; and

"Whereas at least 286 international medical graduates in Ontario have successfully completed the Medical Council of Canada evaluating exam, demonstrating competence in clinical knowledge; and

"Whereas the number of Ministry of Health funded post-graduate positions in 'pool B' (that is, international medical graduates) has been reduced from 289 to 81 since 1994; and

"Whereas the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine has indicated that they have the capacity to absorb an increase in the number of entry-level post-graduate positions, as long as sufficient resources are provided to support the increase; and

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly of Ontario unanimously passed private member's resolution 6 on November 25, 1999, which held that the government of Ontario should implement a plan to improve access to professions and trades for foreign-trained professionals.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care as follows:

"(a) to restore the number of Ministry of Health funded post-graduate positions for international medical graduates to at least 1994 levels;

"(b) to increase immediately the number of entry-level post-graduate training positions to the full capacity of the Ontario faculties of medicine;

"(c) to make the increased entry-level post-graduate positions directly available to international medical graduates who have successfully completed the requisite examinations;

"(d) to develop a plan to identify alternative funding mechanisms that allow more equitable access for international physicians to the health care system in Ontario; and

"(e) to appoint a committee, with representation from the international medical graduate community, to review and dismantle the barriers which have been established to prevent international physicians from gaining fair access to licensure and practice in Ontario."

I support this petition.

## PAPER SLUDGE

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of the riding of Durham have voiced their objection to the storage of paper sludge and related material within the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the residents are concerned over the impact of this material on the air, water and soil of the moraine and on the health of those living nearby; and

"Whereas this issue has been raised at several public meetings by both individual citizens, members of the Protect the Ridges Coalition and municipal governments; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment is currently completing a study of the impact of paper sludge in the riding of Durham:

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take whatever steps are necessary to re-evaluate the use of paper sludge in Ontario, including its stockpiling and storage in rural areas, the spreading of this material on farm fields and any other commercial applications for this material. And that such re-evaluation of this process include consultation with residents in communities where paper sludge is spread, stored and processed. And that the re-evaluation also include whatever technical studies are necessary to fully understand the impact of this material on the natural environment."

I am pleased to support and sign this on their behalf.

## HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in 1998 the Mike Harris government forced hospitals in Bancroft, Belleville, Picton and Trenton, Ontario, to amalgamate into the Quinte Healthcare Corp;

"Whereas the fiscal management of each of the aforementioned hospitals prior to amalgamation was prudent, efficient and accountable to their communities;

"Whereas amalgamation and provincial government cutbacks have created a \$5-million deficit for the Quinte Healthcare Corp;

"Whereas any reduction in hospital and health care services in each of the aforementioned communities is completely unacceptable;

"Whereas this provincial government promised to ensure that the effect of amalgamation would not result in any reduction of health care or hospital services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Instruct Premier Mike Harris and Health Minister Tony Clement to provide enough funding to the Quinte Healthcare Corp that will cover the projected \$5-million deficit and ensure that quality health care and hospital services in the long term will continue in Bancroft, Belleville, Picton and Quinte West."

I am pleased to add my signature to this petition.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I continue to receive petitions from the CAW. These were forwarded to me by Cathy Walker, who is the national health and safety director. The petitions read as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this year 130,000 Canadians will contract cancer and there are at minimum 17 funerals every day for Canadian workers who died from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer-causing substances known as carcinogens; and

"Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all cancers have environmental causes and the International Labour Organization estimates that one million workers globally have cancer because of exposure at work to carcinogens; and

"Whereas most cancers can be beaten if government had the political will to make industry replace toxic substances with non-toxic substances; and

"Whereas very few health organizations study the link between occupations and cancer, even though more study of this link is an important step to defeating this dreadful disease;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That it become a legal requirement that occupational history be recorded on a standard form when a patient presents at a physician for diagnosis or treatment of cancer; and

"That the diagnosis and occupational history be forwarded to a central cancer registry for analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation."

I continue to add my support by adding my name to this petition.

1540

#### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I'm pleased to present this petition. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, expressing concern over health care and possible reduction of any hospital services. It winds up with:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Instruct Premier Mike Harris and Health Minister Tony Clement to provide enough funding to the Quinte Healthcare Corp that will cover the projected \$5-million deficit and ensure that quality health care and hospital services in the long term will continue in Bancroft, Belleville, Picton and Quinte West."

#### PROBATION AND PAROLE OFFICERS

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario have long-standing grievances from many probation and parole officers with respect to reclassification and salaries and the refusal to recognize the significant role probation and parole officers play in the public safety of Ontario,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"We call upon the government of Ontario to have our job reclassified, to reflect the changes in our job over the past number of years. Along with that, we are seeking a significant salary increase, one which mirrors our counterparts within the justice system; namely, judges and crown attorneys."

I affix my name to this petition.

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I have a further petition forwarded to me by Dexter Williams of Mississauga. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the proposed changes to the Employment Standards Act would permit businesses to force full-time work from 40 hours per week to 60 hours per week, and not pay overtime until more than 60 hours is worked; and

"Whereas these changes will allow businesses to force employees to work longer hours for the same amount of pay per year; and

"Whereas these changes would reduce the quality of life for all Ontarians;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario government to implement the following changes to the newly proposed Employment Standards Act:

"Reduce the standard work week to 40 hours;

"Make overtime pay (time-and-a-half) after eight hours in a day, or 40 in a week;

"Enable employees to take vacation days consecutively, and guarantee that half-hour lunch breaks are not broken up into smaller breaks, and;

"Give employees the right to refuse all overtime without reprisal."

I am pleased to add my name to that of Mr Williams and the other petitioners.

#### HORSE RIDING SAFETY

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas an increasing number of Ontarians are turning to horseback riding as a recreational activity; and

"Whereas many of these inexperienced riders are children; and

"Whereas currently there are no minimum safety standards regulating riding establishments; and

"Whereas coroners' inquests into horse riding fatalities from as long ago as 1977 have called for the mandatory use of riding helmets and boots; and

"Whereas an unacceptable number of preventable injuries and fatalities have occurred while horseback riding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass into law the private member's bill introduced by Tina Molinari, MPP for Thornhill, entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, in order to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used, and to



amend the Highway Traffic Act and make it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to ride a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment.”

I affix my name to this petition.

SOCIAL AUDIT

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I am pleased to announce to the Legislature that we are launching a petition campaign to try to persuade the province to perform a social audit on the Ontario Works system. We’ve seen how the social service programs in this province have been absolutely changed over the last six years, and we think a social audit is the only responsible thing for the government to do.

I’m pleased to read my petition, which will be coming from across the province.

“Whereas the Mike Harris—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We’ll allow you to either explain it or read it, but not both.

**Mr Gravelle:** I apologize.

“Whereas the Mike Harris government has undertaken a massive reform of the way social service programs are managed and delivered in this province; and

“Whereas the government’s language, actions and policies over the last six years have reinforced the worst kind of stereotypes about people on social assistance without offering Ontarians any proof that the policies they’ve put in place are meeting the needs of those whose circumstances have forced them to seek temporary assistance from Ontario’s social safety net; and

“Whereas this government when challenged on how well their Ontario Works programs are working, points to welfare caseload numbers as their one and only measurement of success or failure; and

“Whereas a social audit would determine how this government’s policies are impacting on low-income children and families and allow for enhancements to improve the well-being, employability and economic security of individuals and families in need;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the government of Ontario conduct a social audit of its Ontario Works program.”

Much support across the province, and I’m pleased to add my name to this petition.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time for petitions is ended.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Waterloo-Wellington earlier today rose on a point of order and asked for the unanimous consent of this House to allow a member opposite to do something. I noted that unanimous consent was refused. I just ask that the Speaker investigate and determine whether or not the point of order was in fact in order. I believe it was in order to ask

for unanimous consent. It was never put. If we could get a report, I’d appreciate it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** That is a point of order and I will consult with the Speaker and see if there is something that should be done about it.

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** On the same point of order, Mr Speaker, which was not explained by the minister of public works—

**The Acting Speaker:** I’m sorry. It’s not my habit to allow debate on a point of order. I take the point of order and I rule on it and that’s it.

**Mr Sergio:** No, I’m talking to my own point of order.

**The Acting Speaker:** If you have a point of order on your own, then I’d be pleased to hear it.

**Mr Sergio:** My point of order is this, Mr Speaker: that the Speaker of the House who listened to that point of order has already decided on it.

**The Acting Speaker:** If that’s so, then that’s great.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** On a point of order, Speaker: I think there is an opportunity to simply have the caucus respond to what was asked. I would—

**The Acting Speaker:** No, I’m sorry. I don’t entertain debate on points of order. If somebody makes a point of order, I rule on it or prevaricate and find out about it, but I do not take debate on it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 30, 2001, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** I will be sharing my time with the member for Niagara Falls.

It’s a privilege to rise today and speak on the throne speech. It is clear that our government has a plan to address the unique challenges Ontario will face in the next century. We expect the Liberals or New Democrats to come up with solutions to the 19th century problems, or on a creative day, 20th century problems. Only the Mike Harris government has the courage, vision and leadership to look ahead. The 21 Steps Into the 21st Century are just that: looking ahead.

I’m going to focus on just a few of the 21 steps, in the interest of time.

Step 1 is removing barriers to jobs, investment and growth. Plans expressed in the throne speech are good for business and the residents in Thornhill. Simply, Ontario thrives when taxes are low. Ontarians have money for expansion of their businesses. They have money to hire more workers and create employment. They have money to build homes, many of which are being built in Thornhill. This creates further employment.

I had the privilege of meeting Scott Cole, who is a professional engineer, managing director and CEO of Cole Sherman and Associates in Thornhill, in a most recent police appreciation in York region. We talked about the throne speech and the direction of this government. He said to me, "With the reduction in the tax rate, there is more money for companies to invest in upgrading computer equipment and provide employee training. We have put our tax savings back into our key resource: people. Training of employees, such as engineers and architects, has allowed our services to be delivered in a timely fashion, which is key to our industry." This is but one of many Thornhill residents who believe this government is on the right track with tax cuts.

Want more proof? Look around Thornhill. Thornhill is made up of two municipalities: Vaughan and Markham. There are new homes going up in block 10, which is on the Vaughan side; at Highway 7 and Leslie in Markham, more homes going up. On this side of the House we know that a strong economy and a high quality of life are not mutually exclusive. We know that a high quality of life is provided by a strong economy.

1550

Step 2, paying down the debt: previous governments borrowed from the future when spending in the present. Deficit financing, of course, is not sustainable. You can only spend more than you take in for so long, until it starts to catch up with you. Our government recognizes that it's time to start paying down the mortgage on our future so that my children, our children, who are the future generation, will be debt-free. Our government has a plan on debt reduction and we will stick to this plan. Paying down our debt that Ontario has accumulated over decades is the right thing to do. Even federal Liberal Finance Minister Paul Martin agrees with us. But why don't the Ontario Liberals? Perhaps unions haven't yet given Dalton McGuinty permission.

Step 3 is smaller government. Government is not an end unto itself; government exists to serve Ontarians. As citizens, we tend to accept a certain role for governments, government agencies and crown corporations, because that's how it has always been. Why should Ontario be governed as it has always been? It is our responsibility to see how we can improve the lives of Ontarians and see how we can improve the way government serves Ontarians. The status quo, while it is an option, is not the only option. That's the kind of failed thinking that led to inefficient services, larger and larger government and continuous deficits.

Step 10 is choice in education. In York region we are fortunate to have excellent elementary and secondary schools. In most cases there is a choice of the schools they want to go to. But it's not the same in all of Ontario. Our plan to allow more choice in education will even the playing field for all Ontario students and their families.

Step 11, high education standards and performance-based accountability: parents and students should expect a clear assessment of students' progress. Passing should not be an automatic reward for being registered in class

or even showing up. I recall years ago that parents would come to me when I was a trustee with the York Catholic board and ask that their child repeat the grade because they didn't feel they had reached the level to move forward. They asked the teacher, they asked the principal and they asked the school board, and the answer was always, "No, because the students are moving along with their peers." We will, and should, continue to set standards for excellence in schools because parents demand it and students deserve it. While being required to repeat a grade may not help student morale in the short run, being unable to read or count is far worse for their morale in the long run.

Step 13, post-secondary access: our government has long made clear commitments to post-secondary education. Every willing and qualified student will have a place in a post-secondary system. Through SuperBuild investments, we have created tens of thousands of spaces for students who wish to enrol in post-secondary education, recognizing the value of this education and the demand that employers place on it.

What does the opposition think? Let us quote Dalton McGuinty, on a visit to Kingston almost two months ago: "You work hard, you get decent marks, you get to pursue post-secondary studies." This was in the Queen's University Journal, March 9, 2001. Is that the Liberal plan: mediocrity for all?

Instead of settling for decent marks, our government is taking a radical approach: fostering excellence in public schools and in students. The new rigorous curriculum promotes excellence and promotes students in their curriculum so they'll be able to find jobs in the future, will be able to enter this post-secondary education.

Step 14, ensuring a skilled workforce: last summer I had the opportunity to visit a company, RWD tool and die; the CEO is Pino Furfaro. He demonstrated the need of Ontario's businesses for skilled workers in trades. By establishing a post-secondary institution linking education and training to market needs, our government shows that we are listening to people like Pino Furfaro in Ontario.

Step 15 is leadership in health care reform. We have demonstrated our commitment to quality, accessible health care. Who is talking about moving away from the publicly funded health care system and scaremongering? It's the opposition. What are they afraid of? The opportunity to better provide this essential service for Ontarians? Our duty of responsibility to taxpayers and patients? Making the tough decisions necessary to ensure that health care in Canada and Ontario is sustainable?

Telehealth is the kind of innovation that will better serve the needs of Ontarians, at lower cost to all taxpayers. Registered nurses answer health questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week, giving advice on illness, injury and lifestyle questions.

Step 17 is protecting environmental health and safety. Our government has, through initiatives such as Ontario's Living Legacy, demonstrated our commitment to a safe, clean and healthy province.



Last Saturday the Thornhill Community Environment Day, which I attended, was organized by a group called Friends of Little German Mills Creek. Karen Abrahams organized this group and is their leader, along with the area Scout groups. It was a pleasure attending this event. This was supported by organizations such as the town of Markham, St Robert Catholic High School, the Girl Guides of Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Also in attendance were some local councillors—Stan Daurio and Erin Shapero—and our own regional chair, Bill Fisch.

Our government has shown its commitment to this type of project and we encourage other events like this: tree and shrub planting, environmental education, and community garbage cleanup. The community of Thornhill is very committed to the environment and I am pleased that the Ministry of Natural Resources is also committed to the partnership that we have in Thornhill.

The Mike Harris government is ready and willing to accept the challenges of the future. The 21 steps into the 21st century progressively move us into the future. I am quite pleased to be here to speak on this bill and to support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate?

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** It's a pleasure to rise and join in the debate on the throne speech and follow the member from Thornhill. I congratulate her on her opening 10 minutes.

Let me first of all apologize to anyone at home offended by the fact that my jacket is on the chair behind me. It's very hot in here. It's difficult to have it on the entire time I'm in here, so I'm going to leave it off because it's stifling in here.

I want to congratulate the member from Thornhill on her speech. She mentioned in her speech that she was a trustee of a Catholic school board before she came to the Legislature in 1999. Back then, and even today, the government relied quite heavily on her for her advice with a lot of the changes in the education field. I know we talked to the member from Thornhill prior to 1999 about some of the changes, for instance, in the funding formula for education.

When Catholic education was at a disadvantage with the public education system in the way it was funded, the government brought in a new funding formula, and one of the principal beneficiaries of that new funding formula that the member from Thornhill helped us with prior to 1999 was indeed Catholic boards, because it put funding on a fairer footing across Ontario. I know if you talk to Catholic boards all across the province, they realize that. In fact, my Catholic board in Niagara has continued to have increases in funding, over and above those small increments in enrolment growth that they've had. So I congratulate the member for her speech and for her role in the government, now and prior to her election in 1999.

One of the topics the member touched upon in her remarks was the importance of a strong economy. Of course, we've always known that, and that's what we

talked about in 1995, that without a strong economy you wouldn't get the revenues that are needed to invest in health care and education.

**1600**

One of the principal problems with the Ontario economy, especially between 1990 and 1995, was the extremely heavy burden of taxation we had on our citizens. The previous two governments, from 1985 to 1990 and 1990 to 1995, had dramatically increased taxes, especially on the working families of Ontario. What we saw, especially 1990 to 1995, was that even after the American economy had a downturn in 1990-91, they started back on the road to growth shortly thereafter in 1992. In fact, when you hear economic commentators talk about the economy, they talk about the fact that the US has had economic growth since 1992. They had 10 years of uninterrupted strong economic growth. This year that's been tempered a little bit, but it's already starting to come back, as we see.

But Ontario did not experience the bounce back in the economy anywhere nearly as quickly as the Americans did. The biggest reason for that, quite frankly, was that the consumer spending portion of the economy makes up over 60% of our economy, and consumer spending stayed dormant for most of the early 1990s. The reason was because the high levels of taxation that were put on the people of Ontario made it impossible for them to make investments in new vehicles, in their homes, in new homes, washers and dryers and a variety of other things. This government knew that. It knew the frustration Ontario citizens had. I remember working as a student at General Motors, and every time a paycheque came around how frustrated the workers were when they looked at their gross amount and then their net amount, because the amount of taxes that came off was so high and so frustrating. So this government began to reduce taxes in 1995 and has continued to do so ever since. There is a variety of other taxes we also reduced, like the employer health tax and others.

Now, fast-forward into the year 2000-01 and look at the economy. What is the strength of the economy? What has been the underpinning of our economy? What has kept us from spiralling into recession? We've had an economic slowdown similar to that of the United States. We had growth last year and the year before of 5% and 4.5%—very high growth. Our growth this year looks like it'll be about 2.5%. What is it that's been keeping our economy that buoyant, more buoyant than many economies around the world? It is—and every statistic and every economist says this, and every time you pick up a newspaper it reads this—consumer spending.

Now, the federal Liberals have twigged to this and realize they also have to do something on their end—they've been in surplus for a couple of years. They're still taking a lot more out of employment insurance premiums than they need to. They've started to lower those, though. They've also committed to reducing taxation, especially income tax. Why income tax? We know that economists will all tell you that the one tax

that causes more spending in the economy, the one that will help create the most economic growth, is income tax. That is why this government, and now the federal Liberals, are moving on income tax reduction.

So I think the future bodes well. We've had a great five years of economic growth. We've had a bit of a slowdown in 2000-01. That's going to pick up in the second half of this year and continue strong economic growth in the future years. All of that—the vast majority of that—is due to the income tax cuts this government brought in, and I am delighted that we're going to continue with those. That was mentioned in the throne speech.

Also, I might note that with every reduction in income tax we made in Ontario, and other taxes, our revenues went up. That point is often lost on a lot of people. Every time we cut taxes, our revenues grew. Conversely, when governments previous to ours came in and increased income tax rates, their revenues often went down. So you see that we've cut taxes and revenues have gone up, and that has allowed us to do a lot of things; for instance, increase health care spending from about \$17.5 billion to about \$22.5 billion over the last five years. That's substantial.

At some point in time we've got to get some kind of lid on this. I think the Premier alluded to that, and the throne speech has alluded to that. I meet all the time with people at my hospital, and the hospitals will want more money. I know the nurses all want more money and more staff. I know that doctors all want exemptions from their caps. The member for St Catharines got up today and talked about exemptions for ophthalmologists and dermatologists. I have that pressure in my riding, also. We have pressures for more doctors.

Long-term care homes: they all want more funding so they can have more staff and if there is a large ONA agreement, then that's an increase in funding. Community care access centres: in my own area we've seen increased 100% in three years, the budget for the community care access centre; that's for home care.

Mr Rock doesn't quite realize that we've actually moved down this road. He always talks about the need to move toward home care; we've already done that in this province and so have the other provinces. He's a little bit out of touch with that direction we've been moving in.

We've had dramatic increases, but still they want more. I know more and more drugs continue to come on, and the usage of drugs continues to go up. I'm only touching on a few of the pressures in that health care system, and they are immense.

We need to continue to move this economy forward, and I think continued attention to making our economy the most competitive place in the world to locate a business, to make investments, is vital if we're going to continue to be able to have the revenue generation in order to pay for health care investments and the like.

I was particularly delighted, I want to say, to see in the throne speech that my 1997—I believe—private member's bill about expanding the reach of the Provincial

Auditor in the Audit Act so that he could do value-for-money audits of hospitals, colleges, universities and other agencies who receive money from the provincial government was embraced. I did get all-party approval for my bill—I think it was in 1996, perhaps in 1997—for which I thank all the members of the House.

At the time, I remember Minister Eves, in a subsequent budget, promised some sort of alternative to that and to make value-for-money audits the rule of the day in all those institutions. They did start to draft a bill, but that was never really completely followed through with. Instead the government has seen fit to revert back to expanding the Audit Act, as my bill had called for back in 1996, and I'm pleased to see that.

I note, and if anyone cares to go back and look at the debate we had then, you will see that a lot of universities and even hospitals hired lawyers to try to keep the Provincial Auditor out of their institutions, which said to me at the time, and still says to me today, why would they go to that great length to spend public money to keep the Provincial Auditor from looking at their books? It was reprehensible, and I think the government's embracing of that initiative that I put forward in 1996 or 1997—and I believe the member from Kingston and the Islands has also put forward a bill more recently. He's the Chair of the public accounts committee, which I have the pleasure of sitting on with him. He put forward a similar bill, so I know the members opposite will endorse that position in the throne speech. Thank you.

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** There was nothing in the throne speech that eased the insecurities of my constituents when it came to health care, when it came to education and when it came to energy, and I will be talking about education later on in the cycle.

I want to talk about my constituents, John and Margo Bergez, who talk about the increase in their energy costs. They wrote a letter to Mr Harris, and I'll just read a couple of the paragraphs:

"Dear Mr Harris,

"I am writing regarding your plan to deregulate Ontario Hydro.... So far this year I have spent almost what it used to cost for one year!

"Experience in both England and the United States has shown that deregulation invariably results in a reduction of services and increase in prices. This is the result of corporations wanting to maximize their profits. There is nothing wrong with making a profit. But it should not be a case of gouging the public....

"Public utilities belong to the people and before any selling is done they should have a chance to say if this is what they want. Can we be absolutely certain that something similar to what is happening in California will not happen here....

"At present in the United States, Exxon is reporting a first quarter profit of \$5 billion, yet the price of gasoline continues to rise. Can one absolutely be sure that the same will not happen if Hydro is deregulated?



"The way things are going now I am sitting here wondering how much longer my wife and I will be able to live in our house as the costs continue to rocket upwards. We invested everything in this home and losing it would be devastating, more so since we are now retired. This is not a cloud that should be hanging over our heads.

"Please don't do this to us.

"Yours truly...."

It's signed by Mr and Mrs Bergez.

There was nothing in the throne speech that eased these constituents' fears. There was nothing in the throne speech that eased the fears of the constituents whose tuition fees are rising. I noticed the member opposite from Thornhill mentioned fearmongering. It's not fearmongering. These letters are from constituents who are afraid, who are scared. It's nothing we're saying; it's everything you're doing and everything you're not doing to help the residents of this province.

1610

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I want to comment on the remarks of the member from Niagara Falls and, if time permits, Thornhill. I thought it was interesting that the member from Niagara Falls has now definitively told everyone who was wondering when the turnaround was going to come that it's definitely going to happen in the second half. I was quite shocked to hear that, because everybody's searching. First of all it was supposed to be just a first-quarter dip, then it was going to be the second-quarter dip, and now the real debate—and they're 50-50 on it at this point—is whether or not there will be a full-blown recession, and will we get the recovery in the first quarter of 2002? Yet we've got a government backbencher who must have inside information about what's going to happen in the economy because he's just all fired up that it's definitely going to turn around in the second half, meaning of course the third and fourth quarters. It'll be interesting to watch that take place.

I raise that because it has to raise questions about the rest of his economic analysis. The member talked about the fact that everything can be put to consumer spending. To a large part he's correct, except a lot of that consumer spending demand that has been giving us the stimuli in Ontario has been coming from the United States. It's the American demand in large part for new automobiles, which of course is the industry that is the engine of our economy, certainly in Ontario and to a large degree in all of Canada, that gives us the buoyancy. What on earth would tax cuts in Ontario have to do with somebody who lives in Wisconsin deciding whether or not they're going to buy a new car?

The fact of the matter is that they couldn't have screwed up this economy if they'd tried, the demand coming out of the United States was so great. So let's keep in mind as the economy goes into the ditch that they want to take credit when it's booming; they're going to take responsibility when it's over.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** It is a pleasure to take part in the debate this afternoon, where the member from Niagara Falls spoke eloquently, and the member from Thornhill. Members opposite always talk about doom and gloom and how our economy is tied to the US economy and our economy only grows because of the US. They fail to understand and acknowledge that Ontario's economy grew much more than the US economy. In fact, we grew more than all the G7 countries.

One of these 21 steps for the 21st century—we have three challenges and three priorities that we are going to be carrying forward: growth, fiscal responsibility and accountability. If we talk about growth, that growth being Smart Growth, we do believe in growth but we have to make sure that we look after the environment at the same time. We want to be protecting the moraine and, at the same time, jobs. We want to make sure that there is job growth. In the past six years, because of our tax cuts, we have been able to create more than 822,000 net new jobs. More than 576,000 people have been able to come home and say, "Family, I got the job."

Those are the people who are now working very hard, paying the tax dollars. A lot of times the debate goes on: "How do tax cuts create jobs?" Because they fuel the economy. The money that goes back into the people's pockets fuels the economy and thus more people are working. It's very simple. It's very simple arithmetic. More people are working and paying more money, and the government has more money to spend on much-needed programs like health care, which I'm sure we'll be talking about this afternoon.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I'd like to comment with respect to something the member from Thornhill said earlier. She said that in effect the government shouldn't be borrowing money. This government did even worse than that. When we were still running an annual deficit over the last five years, it borrowed up to \$10 billion in order to pay for the tax cut.

I suppose the fundamental difference between their approach and the approach of the federal government has been the fact that the federal government, through Mr Martin, said categorically, "We are not going to have tax cuts while we're still running an annual deficit." So if she now bemoans the fact that we have a debt in Ontario of \$115 billion, when it was \$85 billion when they took over in 1995, let us just remind the people of the province that \$10 billion of that was caused by premature tax cuts when we were still running a deficit on an annual basis.

Coming to the member from Niagara Falls and dealing with the amendments to the Audit Act, I totally agree with him. He brought a bill forward in 1996, which I substantially brought forward again in December of last year, which I again introduced on the first day of the session just last week, in which we're basically asking the Provincial Auditor to have the authority to follow the money that's being transferred to our transfer agencies: universities, hospitals, school boards, municipalities.

Sixty per cent of the money that the province of Ontario spends, it spends through those transfer agencies, which the Provincial Auditor cannot have any audit control over at all.

We want that power, and I invite him. He didn't get anywhere in 1996, even though it was included in the throne speech at that time and in the budget speech of Mr Eves of that time. I found it very interesting that there was absolutely nothing mentioned by any of the ministers yesterday. I therefore ask at this point in time—

**The Acting Speaker:** Time has expired.

**Mr Gerretsen:** As my time is over, I move unanimous consent to give second and third reading to Bill 5, my private member's bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Niagara Falls has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Maves:** Thank you to the members opposite, the member for Hamilton-Mountain, the member for Hamilton West, the member for Kingston and the Islands and the member with the longest title here, Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, for responding to my comments.

Firstly, it's not just me standing up and prognosticating about the economy. Any time you pick up a paper or read news articles off Web sites, you'll see a lot of columnists and economic people talking about how important consumer spending has been to this economy in the last little while.

Here's one. The member opposite accused me of being ahead of everybody. I just happened to look at Mr Martiniuk's paper, the member for Cambridge. The first article says, "The Canadian economy, like its US counterpart, continues to defy the pessimists," like the members opposite, "said David Rosenberg, chief economist at Merrill Lynch Canada. 'Although the economy is not strong, it is not headed for a recession. The full impact of the interest rate and tax cuts ushered in this year have yet to be felt.'" So there are quite a few people saying the same thing. While I appreciate the flattering comments that the member thinks I would come out ahead of everybody else in my predictions, no, some of my comments are guided by other economists and things that they're saying, things that I'm reading.

To the member for Hamilton Mountain, I think what you should think about responding with to the person who wrote you about higher hydro rates is that while the NDP, for the first three years in office, increased hydro rates by about 35%, they did freeze them in 1993. There's been a freeze on hydro rates for eight years in the province of Ontario. Your party was against those freezes and I think that you should perhaps be honest and write back, "While we were opposed to that, we now understand that hydro rates are important to people and homeowners."

**Mr Gerretsen:** On a point of order, Speaker: At the end of my response, I made a motion that second and third reading be given to Bill 5. At that point of time, there were no noes in this House and one aye from the member for Thunder Bay. I therefore request you to rule—

**The Acting Speaker:** You had the floor for two minutes for comments and questions. At the end of that period, your time expires and somebody else would have the floor. You went on, and I assume what you're telling me that you told us was said after you no longer had the floor. That is not a point of order.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Mr Speaker, then I rise on a new point of order: I would request that this assembly give unanimous consent to Bill 5 and give second and third reading to that bill at this time. I ask for unanimous consent.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there consent? It is not agreed.

Further debate?

1620

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** I am delighted to join the debate on the speech from the throne. I would like to ask that my time be split with the member for Hamilton Mountain.

To continue the debate on the speech from the throne of a few days ago, it wasn't so much a speech from the throne. Normally at the beginning of a new session, a government introduces, through a so-called speech from the throne, their intentions, their ideas, their priorities to govern not only this House, but the people of Ontario. What the throne speech failed to address was those "must" principles, if you will, priorities that are so dear to the people of Ontario. What is so disappointing about the speech from the throne is that there was absolutely nothing that addressed the crisis, the chaos or the cuts, and if I may I will add a fourth C, the commotion the government has created since coming to power in 1995.

You would think that a top priority of the government in the coming session, after a four-month hiatus, would be dealing with the crisis in the health care system or the chaos in the education system. I don't have to tell you what that is, because we went through three very tumultuous weeks involving our students, parents, teachers, boards and whatever, and we are still dealing with it.

You would think the government would have come up with a priority list, addressing the extreme needs created by the crisis in our health care needs. As we are standing in the House today, we have the nurses in a new crisis, fighting for their rights. Why are we there? That's what the government wanted. It's because of what the government did over the last five, six, seven years.

With the environment, a very important area, there is nothing in the speech from the throne.

Energy: oh yes, it's going to come—electricity, gasoline, heating oil and gas. There is nothing to address that in this throne speech. I'll come to electrical energy for the people of Ontario—not only for the individual members of our society but also for the business community in Ontario, and especially the small business people—but I want to touch first on the two most important issues, because with limited time I won't be able to address even a very minute part of what is in the speech from the throne or what I wanted to talk about.



Let me address the health care system. We are in disarray today because when this government came into power they said, "We are going to change. We are going to revolutionize. We are going to reform. We are going to bring in changes." We said, "Slow down and do it right," the same thing we said when they wanted to amalgamate the various municipalities, including Toronto. We said, "Slow down and get it right." But they've been bulling ahead, and they still do, and that is why we are in this mess today.

They wanted to create a so-called hospital restructuring commission with the power to do whatever they wanted. We said that the way they are going about it is wrong. We went on for three years and, Mr Premier, you knew it. They knew that what they were doing and the way they were going about it was wrong. So it took about three to three and a half years to realize that. Then what happened? The hospital restructuring commission was disbanded. Unfortunately I have to say it was disbanded without putting in place any other facilities to take the slack created by the action of closing hospitals by their restructuring commission.

On top of that, what did the government do? They established the local community care centres and they gave them some funding. They did away with some of the agencies that had been providing a wonderful service for many years. What happened was that they cannot provide enough service to home care facilities because of funding. Of course, if long-term-care patients were getting five, six, seven hours a week of care in their homes, today they are lucky if they get two hours a week.

Are we better off with the health care system today? Little did we know that the government had something else in mind: to eventually create chaos and a crisis and say, "This is not working. We have to do something. We've got to move to privatize, Americanize and create a two-tier system in the health care system." Now it is very much in the open.

When the Premier says, "Well, what's the fear about looking at private not only health care systems any more but private hospitals?" My people dread to think that we will have private health care and private hospitals. I hope the government really comes to their senses and abandon this idea which they know is not going to work in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

Education: chaos and crisis. Can our kids in Ontario really get the best education when they grow up going from one crisis to another? We've had four interruptions in the last two years. Parents are truly, and rightly so, annoyed at the fact that they don't want to have their kids grow up in the type of environment where every few months there is a crisis created by the government because of funding. Truly I can feel for those students and parents, who have to live in fear that every few months or so their schools will be closed, the kids out of the classrooms and a new crisis created. I don't think this is what we want.

Time is running out but I want to address quickly the energy crisis that we are facing smack in the face. I have

to say that the people who are going to suffer the brunt of the extremely high cost of electricity energy are going to be individual Ontarians, and especially seniors. And it is going to affect very adversely the business community, especially the small business community in Ontario. The first ones will be in the tourist industry, those small businesses or small industries. When they see their power double and triple three or four times, they will be the first ones to go out of business. What is the government going to do about that? There is absolutely nothing in this budget which takes into consideration the plight of small business people.

Ask the people of Ontario, are we better off today? Are we creating a better climate, better living conditions? Do we have better education, a better health care system, emergency services in hospitals? No. The answer is no.

Who created the crises? We've fired 10,000 nurses—\$400 million to let them go. Now we go to Texas to beg them to come back. What about doctors? I think we have some 120 communities in Ontario, especially in northern and in southwestern Ontario, with an extreme shortage of doctors. Do you think the government is really doing something about that? It is a shame.

I have to say that we, as Liberals, on this side of the House, with Dalton McGuinty as our leader, have put on the table good policies, good solutions, and I hope the government will apply more of those Liberal solutions to the government of the day. I have to say that, as it has been presented, this speech from the throne is a total disappointment.

1630

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** The citizens of Ontario are increasingly voicing their concern with a visionless government, and this throne speech just reinforced their belief. This government is adrift and directionless, whether it's in health care, energy or education.

The people are concerned about the lack of security they experience in their jobs, education and access to post-secondary. A recent poll showed that 64% of individuals expressed finding it increasingly hard to afford college and university, and 62% of individuals recognize that tax cuts aren't enough, that we need a long-term plan to protect our prosperity. As Liberals, we believe in smart tax cuts targeted to benefit the working families of Ontario, to enable those who need financial support to access higher education.

Between 1990 and 2000, operating grants for full-time university students declined, after adjusting for inflation, by 29%. Between 1992 and 1999, full-time faculty declined by approximately 12% and there's an impending faculty shortage coming ever so quickly. From 1990 to 1999, university tuition fees more than doubled, from \$1,639 to \$3,951, on average, for an undergraduate degree. Between 1990 and 1999, colleges experienced a 35% increase in enrolment due to demographics but experienced a 39.9% decrease in funding. In 1990 per student funding for a college was \$5,775; in 1999 it was \$2,302. It is actually miraculous that the colleges are still surviving, considering this massive cut per student.

The post-secondary system in Ontario is in crisis, whether we like to admit it on the opposite side of the House or not. We are 59th out of 60 jurisdictions in North America in our provincial per capita funding. If on budget day we don't increase funding, we will quickly fall to last, behind Bush's Texas.

There is a 35% accessibility rate to post-secondary institutions in Ontario, and yes, that is an improvement, but in the United States the accessibility rate is 60%. Preparation for the double cohort is insufficient if not supported with additional operating dollars. Yes, Super-Build has added a lot of money to the system, although flawed with respect to its process in matching dollars, but it will just be empty buildings if we don't add to the operating costs of our post-secondary institutions.

The first wave of the double cohort will hit Ontario's institutions in 2003, but less remarked upon is the second wave which will hit the 905 belt in 2007. The 905 belt has the largest-growing number of 18- to 24-year-olds in the country—not even in the province; in the country—yet York, Ryerson and the U of T have asked for capital funds to build in the 905 belt and have been rejected. The SuperBuild funding did not take into account where the demographic bulges are going to occur, and Trent and Sir Sandford Fleming received more space allocations than York and U of T. All the power to Trent and Sir Sandford Fleming, but this hardly seems logical in the grand scheme of things.

The universities have made a commitment to provide the spaces required to accommodate the first wave of the double cohort, but on the condition that there is full average funding available for each of those additional students. At present there are a number of students who are being funded by the universities but are not—

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you please stop the clock. I'm leaving the chair momentarily. I had a point of order brought up by the Minister of Labour and I thought I should address it before I leave. He had a point of order about an event that happened a little earlier this afternoon between the Chair and the member for Waterloo-Wellington. I just wanted to inform the House that it was not a point of order. I'm sure he'll get that message.

My apologies for interrupting. The Chair recognizes the member for Hamilton Mountain.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. That was an important interruption.

The full average funding simply means that we stay where we are, where we don't even get worse than where we are. The price tag for that is an additional \$500 million, and the university's ability to deliver on this commitment is dependent on this funding.

SuperBuild was a flawed competition. It did not account for where the demographic growth would occur. The post-secondary system can accommodate the numbers, but will students really apply for spaces that the government has created? It hasn't been on target for all of the programs.

With respect to operating grants, universities and colleges need to be treated fairly but not identically. The

government's cookie-cutter approach to funding does not allow for innovation, creativity or outside-the-box solutions to providing quality post-secondary education.

The post-secondary system is increasingly depending upon private sector dollars, but tied by government agenda, dollars are slow to materialize. We desperately need this full average funding just to accommodate the double cohort, but universities also need longer-term funding in place to hire additional professors, to account for demographic shifts and to pay for deferred maintenance.

In the next 10 years many of our professors will be retiring. One of the challenges for us is that in the next five years many of the US professors will be retiring, and they are already up here trying to recruit our best.

The marginal versus national average costs need to be commented on. The struggling institutions which committed to accommodating the increased demand can't handle the extra students without this full average funding. In some ways, these institutions have been punished for taking on more students than they can afford, because now, the way the tuition funding and the operating grants work, it's pretty well fixed and inflexible.

Private sector dollars help to support the work in post-secondary, and help through endowments is always needed but should not replace government investment. The dangerous scenario here with private sector dollars is that it's great in the good times, financially, but with a volatile stock market and the downsizing and market corrections of the last few months, the private sector often no longer has huge profits and has to back out of partnerships and commitments. This has happened in Ottawa with Nortel and Corel. A number of programs at the University of Ottawa, at Carleton and at Algonquin College are going to end because of the downturn in the economy.

The key performance indicators which this funding is based on have been called "intellectually vacant." The minister herself admitted that they needed to be improved. That was almost a year ago, and we haven't heard any signs of improvement.

There is a huge difficulty in delivering nursing programs, particularly in the northern colleges. There is still some confusion about specifics. I made a member's statement yesterday about the applied degrees. The colleges are still waiting for permission to proceed with these applied degrees. This affects nursing and other programs directly, and not all universities and colleges have agreements. This challenges their funding and setting of tuition levels and program delivery.

Algonquin College lost some \$1 million a year on its nursing program. It decided it was worth it due to the demand for the nurses in the north, but it's simply not sustainable. This program is at risk if the government doesn't wake up to the need for more dollars in the colleges.

The Association of Canadian Universities has shown that the participation rates, due to demographics, have increased. However, the funding that the federal govern-



ment has given to all the provinces has been dealt with differently in all the provinces. In Ontario, instead of giving the millennium scholarships to the students over and above, which was the spirit of the agreement, this government sucked that money up in general revenues and gave back the loan forgiveness that they would have given anyway. In other words, there was no net value to the students. In fact, some students were at a disadvantage because the Canadian millennium scholarship is taxable.

The government's own task force, which I confess I was afraid of—I thought they would just tell the government what they wanted to hear, that it would be a whitewash, but they have developed a very good document, *Portals and Pathways: A Review of Postsecondary Education in Ontario*. One of the most interesting aspects of this report is the strong recommendation for increased funding in post-secondary education. Assessing the adequacy of government funding did not fall within the mandate of the task force, yet a significant portion of the report is dedicated to this very topic. This is the government's task force.

1640

What are their findings? That Ontario's post-secondary institutions are both cost-effective and innovative, efficient and fiscally responsible. "However, we are at a crossroads," the report says. The projected revenue gap threatens the very survival of Ontario's post-secondary institutions. In order for growth needs to be met, additional sources of revenue beyond tuition fees will need to be found. Tuition as a percentage of operating revenue has climbed to 39.1% in this province. At Brock, it's 46.5% and at Nipissing, 49.5%. The university students at Nipissing are funding half their education. It's as if the government has forgotten that they exist.

Institutions are aging. Deferred maintenance costs—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr Christopherson:** Let me commend my colleagues from York West and Hamilton Mountain for pointing out a number of areas where we on this side of the House feel the government is letting down the people of Ontario. I thought the member from York West asked a very pertinent question. He posed the question to us all, "Are we better off?"—not exactly an original approach to politics but one that's very effective when it's real. The fact of the matter is, this is a good time to apply that political examination of what's happening. Are we better off? Does the average person in Ontario believe that the health care system is better now than when Mike Harris took power in 1995? Certainly the education system, as also remarked by my colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain, when she talked about tuition increases and talked about the importance of investing in our education system—all of it: does anyone actually believe that the education system in Ontario is better today than it was in 1995?

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** Of course.

**Mr Christopherson:** You hear the government backbenchers holler out, "Of course." That shows just about

how much thought they put into this. If the Premier says this is good, they all say, yea, and if it's the opposition saying it's bad, then they're opposed to that. I invite the member who said that to come on into Hamilton. Come on in and meet with Ray Mulholland, the chair of the school board, and let's talk to Ray about what your funding formula means for special education in Hamilton. I don't see him taking me up on it, but I leave that offer there. Come on into Hamilton and tell Ray Mulholland, the chair of our board, that our education system is better. You look him right in the eye and then look at the kids in Hamilton and you tell them it's better.

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** We heard a bit of doom and gloom earlier this afternoon. I don't think that doom and gloom is particularly well-founded. When we take a look at the student achievement scores in our education system, we find that they're going up. That, to me, means we're achieving better student achievement than we did before. One thing is for certain: we had very little measurement of what was happening prior to 1995. To their credit, the former government began to understand that and started to do something about it. But I feel that we can now look forward to some objective and effective measurements which can then identify success and will be able to identify areas where more has to be done.

We also heard a lot of concerns about our post-secondary system. I think our post-secondary system is in fact quite strong and getting stronger. It was a matter of some interest to me, for example, that the Richard Ivey School of Business at the University of Western Ontario was rated for their graduate program as being the 19th-best in the world by the Financial Times of London, England. It was rather interesting as well that they are rated in terms of value for money and they are, by the way, at full cost recovery. In terms of value for money, the Ivey school of business was rated by the Financial Times of London, England, as being the best in the world.

So I think when we hear the various concerns offered, and there are some legitimate concerns in the system—I think all members of the House understand that—we shouldn't mistake the concerns we hear for a lack of progress and a lack of excellence in the system. I do note that we find a good number of people coming from other jurisdictions in Canada and from foreign jurisdictions to take post-secondary education here in Ontario. I think that is a strong vote of confidence in our system and in what's happening.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I'd like to thank my colleagues from York West and Hamilton Mountain for their presentation of the past, the present and the future. I think they've outlined what the speech from the throne lacks for Ontarians in the future. There's very, very little substance to it. In fact, to be quite honest, those of us who have followed the announcements of Mike Harris over the course of his tenure from 1995 on would probably now admit that they're both wary and weary of the rhetoric and the doublespeak.

It's happening in every sector in Ontario. Let me tell you that health care is inferior, education is struggling because of what this government has done to it, municipalities are pleading and crying out for help, and all the speech from the throne does is try to beat those partners up some more with what we call accountability. The reality is that when we ask this government to be accountable, when the people of Ontario, through the loyal opposition and the third party, ask the government members to be accountable, they bury bills, like they did mine last week, or they don't produce documents, as the Premier continues to do with regard to his travel.

I would suggest to you that if anybody thinks health care is better than it was when Mike Harris took over, they might want to come and visit Sudbury. Visit Gerry Loughheed Jr, who is heading up the Heart and Soul Campaign, the biggest fundraising effort in Sudbury's history, to the tune of \$40 million, because this government won't provide money for our new hospital that they imposed on us. It's the campaign nobody wants but we all have to do because this government isn't accountable to the people.

**Mr Maves:** I congratulate the member from Hamilton Mountain on her comments to the throne speech. She'll understand if I don't agree with all of her comments, but I appreciate her taking time to make the response to the throne speech. I've had an opportunity to speak with some of the members opposite, such as the member from Kingston and the Islands, and we spoke about the importance to one another of the changes to the Audit Act that were going to be in the throne speech and how important it is to bring accountability to all the institutions that we flow money to.

The auditor has pointed out many times that he's very frustrated that he can look at all the offices of our ministries and pick any little portion of any ministry he wants and do an audit on it. Actually, we appreciate that. We support that. The Provincial Auditor works for all of us in this House. Sometimes it embarrasses governments that are in office when they do a report and they find waste and inefficiency—

**Interjection:** Mostly.

**Mr Maves:** —mostly it can be embarrassing. But the reality is that he's the taxpayer's best friend, and I shouldn't just say "he," because we could have a female Provincial Auditor. But the Provincial Auditor is the best friend for taxpayers. Even in this House, if you take all of us combined, we're only 103 and we need someone like the Provincial Auditor's office to go out and do detailed value-for-money audits and find waste and say to institutions and to our ministries, "Look. You're doing this inefficiently. Here's a way to do it better." The auditor doesn't just point out flaws with the way things are being done. He gives recommendations.

We need to extend that value-for-money process to hospitals, universities and colleges. It's nice to see that all members of the House agree with that direction. I know we should have all-party support when that bill moves forward.

### **The Deputy Speaker: Response?**

**Mr Sergio:** My thanks to the members from Hamilton West, London West and Sudbury, and the wonderful member from lovely Niagara Falls. It's always a pleasure to visit Niagara Falls.

1650

Really, are the people of Ontario asking that much when they say they want a clean, safe environment? I don't think so. Do they really ask too much of this government when they say, "We want an affordable and available health care system and an emergency care system when we need it"? I don't think they are asking for very much. Is this what the government is giving them? I don't think so.

Is the government looking after our seniors, their dignity? I don't think so. There is nothing in this budget, absolutely nothing. Day in and day out they are de-listing new drugs for seniors. On the other hand we see that expenses are growing more and more for those people, the most needy in our community. I think we on this side, and I'm sure on the government side too, over the past few months, the long winter months, had a lot of seniors crying about the very high expense of heating their homes. They were complaining, "We can afford to pay the bills or we have to buy some of the drugs that are needed or we have to let some food go as well." There's nothing in this speech from the throne for those people.

So, let's ask again: are the people of Ontario asking too much when they say, "We want a good education system and a good health care system as well, and a government that really takes to heart the interests of the people in Ontario"?

**Mr Wood:** It will come as no surprise to members of the House that I rather liked the throne speech. In particular I liked the commitment in the throne speech to enhancing community safety and enhancing victims' rights.

I would like to put on the record today the ways I think the Ontario Crime Control Commission can help fulfill those commitments. The House is probably familiar with how the Crime Control Commission functions: it provides policy advice to the government, it takes a look at research on the various problems that are identified with crime control, it conducts community forums. The last time I was on the commission, it conducted some 70 community forums across Ontario, from east to west and from north to south, and heard all kinds of good ideas from all kinds of people throughout the province.

When we hear these concerns and answer questions, that gives us a lot better feel for what the people across Ontario are thinking in the area of community safety. I might say that the commission will accept an invitation from any member of this House to visit his or her riding, conduct a community forum and get ideas from people.

The commission also gives awards for excellence in crime control. The purpose of that, of course, is to recognize both police officers and citizens who make a difference in respect to safety in their community. We also conduct conferences, which are an excellent way to



share the latest ideas with the various stakeholders and the public, to get their ideas and to show how some of these new ideas can be implemented in their communities.

Of course the question arises, as the commission does its work, as to which crime-preventing ideas we should most immediately look at. One that was referred to in the statement by the Attorney General today is, is the early intervention we're doing as effective as it could be in preventing criminal delinquency later in life? The answer to that, of course, requires work and study. But I think the research is crystal clear that early intervention—and that is the Healthy Babies, Health Children program we have—does indeed stop crime really when you get into the early teens and for a long period of time after that.

The classic study was the Perry Preschool Project, which was started some 35 years ago in Ann Arbor, Michigan. It has demonstrated quite conclusively that better parenting results in less criminal and non-criminal delinquency. Some members of the House will be familiar with a program that was started a few years ago in the state of Hawaii, that basically works like this: they use an actuarial table to determine what parents are parents at risk. These might constitute, give or take, something like 10% of the population. Once these parents are identified, hopefully before birth because some damage can be done prior to birth that's irreversible afterwards with fetal alcohol syndrome being an excellent example of that, they are offered intensive help on what it means to be a good parent.

What they found in Hawaii was that when they offered this help, the overwhelming majority of parents at risk took it. Of course, those who do not take it have identified themselves as people for the children's aid or whatever the equivalent is in Hawaii to monitor fairly closely. What they found was effective in Hawaii was intensive intervention. It was a question of doing it very frequently so that the people who were doing the intervention might visit the new parents three times or more a week to explain what you did when the baby cried, how you fed the baby, what sleep the baby needed and so on.

The assistance is given in a culturally compatible way. Hawaii is a very ethnically diverse state. They try to have native Hawaiians helping native Hawaiians. The program itself is by and large delivered by volunteers, although it is organized and supervised by professionals. A lot of the volunteers in the program are people who were actually helped out by the program earlier on.

The research tells us that they are almost certainly going to see a major reduction in crime over time simply because of this program, assuming it to be effective, which it appears it is going to be. One of the interesting immediate results of this program in Hawaii—by immediate I mean after two or three years—is they found a 75% drop in child abuse cases in the areas where they had the program introduced.

I hope we are going to be able to take a close look at what we are doing in Ontario, at what we are doing that is right, at what we are doing that needs improvement, so

that we can enter into what I consider to be a key to a substantial further reduction in crime in Ontario.

Another part of crime prevention is the most effective enforcement possible. As most members of the House will know and recognize, enforcement has a major impact on the safety of the community. One theory we find to be a very convincing one is called the broken windows theory, which basically holds that if you permit minor disorder, broken windows, that kind of thing, it is a signal to those who want to commit crimes that no one cares. The smaller crimes then lead to the larger crimes.

An experiment was done some 35 years ago that involved leaving a car with licence plates on in a shopping plaza parking lot for a week. They did that and no one touched the car. They left a similar car with no plates on and within a day the car had been almost totally stripped by various criminals. That really was a good example of the basis for that theory.

The classic example of that theory working, which I mention only because they were doing so many things wrong in enforcement and when they started doing them right they started to get such positive results, is the city of New York. The city of New York had, to put it politely, a very serious crime problem in the early 1990s. They added police and got some reduction in crime, but the big reduction came when they changed their enforcement policies. With that change of strategy and adding no new police officers, within three years the reported crime went down 39% in the city of New York. Over a period of half a dozen years, the murder rate went down by almost two thirds in the city of New York.

The classic example of what happened is the city's jewel, their park system, which is Central Park, which was, to put it politely, for those who visited prior to 1993 a fairly scary place to visit. What the city of New York did was, number one, send the parks department in to clean up the parks so that average citizens might want to actually visit them. The second thing they did was send the police in to get rid of the known criminals who were in the park. The third thing they did was change the rules to make it more difficult for criminals to be in the park. For example, if you're an adult you cannot be in a children's play area in any park in the city of New York unless you're accompanied by a child aged 12 or under. The fourth thing they did was involve neighbourhood groups in making permanent the changes they had brought about.

#### 1700

The net effect of all that was that Central Park is now in the safest precinct in the city of New York. That's a classic example of effective enforcement policies making a really positive difference for a community. What the police found generally was that as they cracked down on minor crimes, they were arresting people who did bigger crimes, because criminals tend to do all kinds of crimes. Relatively few are disciplined enough to engage in major crime only.

Here in Ontario, of course, I think we're off to quite a good start as a government. Reported crime in Ontario is

down 28% in the five years from January 1, 1995, to December 31, 1999. But we still have a long way to go to achieve the level of community safety that people want. I suggest, however, that if we follow a good plan and devote adequate resources to it, we can achieve a further major reduction in crime in Ontario.

I think that another way of achieving some of these results is to take a look at the effectiveness of our justice and correctional systems. I was pleased to note that the Attorney General made reference today to us being asked to take a look at this question. When you ask people, as we did across Ontario a few years ago, what result they want from the corrections system—and surveys back this up as well as talking to people directly—here's what they say: the first thing they want is restitution to the victim. The second thing they want is the offender not to reoffend. The third thing they want, in serious cases, is punishment of the offender, and that's particularly true for serious crimes like murder.

Given that quite clear mandate from the people, restitution and punishment are fairly straightforward. The question of getting the offender to avoid offending is a little more complex. I believe that if we're going to reduce reoffending, one thing we have to do is create a more effective corrections cycle. By that I mean that what we have to do is get the system to focus first on what kinds of corrections work. That's easy enough to find, because there is some quite good research indicating what kinds of corrections activity will avoid someone reoffending. Then we've got to get the system to implement them.

What this means in practice, of course, is that the courts have got to give sentences that work and the correctional people must then offer programs that work. We then monitor the results so that we can make the cycle more effective. This will hold out the major possibility of replacing a cycle of reoffending—and we have to bear in mind that among our institutional young offenders, some 60% reoffend, and among adult institutional offenders, 80% reoffend. This will have the effect of replacing the current cycle of reoffending by a cycle of more effective corrections.

What I have just said probably sounds pretty obvious, but I think we don't do it in our system now as much as we could. We have to make sure our courts and our correctional system do this in the most effective way possible.

We also think it's worth taking a look at ways to involve the general public. I don't want to get too far into this today, because time doesn't permit. But I would remind the House that right now we tend to involve citizens in the criminal justice system to determine guilt or innocence—that's basically what juries do—but we give citizens relatively little say in the sentencing process. I invite the House to consider whether that is a good choice. The possibility exists, and the House will be familiar with the community justice committees that are being tried on an experimental basis now, the choice exists to give citizens more input into sentencing, and I think it's something that's well worth taking a look at.

One of the most dangerous forms of crime is of course organized crime. Ontario, as we know, is being targeted by certain criminal organizations as a jurisdiction into which they would like to move. I would suggest strongly to the House that we have got to follow some of the strategies we know will work and put adequate resources into doing something about this problem.

I'd like to leave the House with this thought: if we want communities that we can be proud of, communities in which everyone can achieve to his or her full potential, if we want schools in which everyone can feel safe to learn, I would suggest it's absolutely essential that we reduce crime to the lowest possible level. I think it's the duty of all of us as citizens to become involved and do all we can to further that goal.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments? The member for Sudbury.

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** He's sharing his time.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Are you sharing it?

**Mr Wood:** I'd be pleased to share it, if desired.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It was not announced.

**Mr Wood:** I'll ask for unanimous consent to share the remainder of my time with the member for Durham.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Durham, you have not participated in the debate? Member for Durham.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I respect the members in the House. This is really a good sign when people humble themselves to allow me a chance to speak on behalf of my riding of Durham. Certainly the member from London West is best to exemplify this sharing, compassionate tone he's very familiar with. The members on this side I think try to commit to the people of Ontario and those listening today and those that'll read Hansard, heaven forbid—we are committed clearly to deliver on the 21 steps.

To me there's more symbolism in the 21 steps than just the 21st century. To me it's like a celebration. It's like a 21-gun salute, which really speaks to the dignity and honour, to the traditions of this great province.

I always like to go back to the basics. For those viewing today, what does all this language mean? The Premier, travelling the province as he has relentlessly over the period between January and today, May 1, is getting the message out. It's all part of an overarching commitment to accountability and accessibility for the people of Ontario. I know that for me and my colleagues—this side of the House is really all I'm qualified to speak for although I could make certain aspersions on the other side—always being available and accountable is certainly, a lot of people would say, to make the tough decisions, the necessary decisions, starting back, you might say, when they were developing the original platform.

It really hasn't changed all that much. Its faithful navigator, the Premier, Mike Harris, has kept us on a steady course to make and deliver on our commitments. That was to deal with the \$1 million an hour that was being spent in excess of revenue, putting at risk the very



security of this province. Many economists and those who would know stated that this province was at some risk under the stewardship, or lack of it, by the NDP and the Liberals.

I want to go further back on this whole issue. If you could bear with me in the very few minutes left, to me it really comes down to four guiding principles.

The first one is that you have to have a strong economy so that you can afford to have the health, education and social infrastructure we know made this province so great. In that, you can't write a cheque every time someone asks a question. That comes to part two.

Part two is the commitment to fiscal responsibility. Unlike Floyd Laughren and Bob Rae and some of his cronies, as I like to refer to them—backroom decisions were made there, the social contract, all the things that I'm sure were distasteful but nonetheless were also irresponsible.

I go back to the second fundamental, which is the fiscal responsibility part, and this is all overarched by the principle of accountability. I think the best demonstration of that is amending the Audit Act to permit all of our partners that share the majority of the money, the MUSH sector—municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals—to be fully accountable because they're spending our taxpayers' dollars.

But the fourth—and this is often overlooked. The most important thing of all of this is to have strong leadership, with the vision and commitment to deliver on the promises. That's what is absolutely dormant to the opposition, in two respects, actually. There is a deficit in leadership and there is a deficit in vision.

I don't like to bring this to a personal tone, as has been done by the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane earlier this week. I would say it's a series of bottom-feeders technically challenging a government that is prepared to be accountable and to make the tough decisions.

Out of respect for the members here I've spoken from the high ground. I've spoken passionately about my commitment, not just to my constituents in Durham, but on behalf of the Premier and our cabinet, many of whom are here today. We are committed to delivering better, more effective, more accountable government. Any government that fails to do that—and it could be argued that in Ottawa, if you want to move there for a little while, there is a vacancy there too that I see. It's the backroom deals. It's the golf course deals. It's the various things that somehow just don't stick to them. I know the Premier has had a good run of 37 years, but I think the candle has been burnt at both ends there and I'm afraid they imitate that very poorly here in Ontario.

With that, I appreciate the opportunity to bring some reason—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr Bartolucci:** I would like to thank the members from London West and Durham for their comments. Although I fundamentally and philosophically disagree

with what they're saying, I appreciate the right they have to speak from their party's perspective.

I would like to follow up the two-minuter I was doing earlier with regard to why the people of northern Ontario and in particular why the people of Sudbury have trouble with the accountability factor of this government.

We've already talked about hospitals and hospital restructuring and how my community is faced with an enormous task of raising \$40 million-plus to help to pay for their share. We've already called it the Heart and Soul Campaign, chaired by Gerry Lougheed Jr. Thank God for Gerry Lougheed Jr, but he's dubbed it the Campaign Nobody Wants. We don't want this campaign but we have no choice but to have it.

But then let's talk about municipal restructuring for a little while, because that was the government's next attack on the community of Sudbury. They ordered the regional municipality of Sudbury to restructure from seven municipalities down to one, to the city of greater Sudbury, and they said there would be enormous savings. The reality is, the government took seven debt-free municipalities and saddled the city of greater Sudbury with millions of dollars of debt. We have a debt of \$10.3 million thanks to Mike Harris, thanks to his restructuring of the regional municipality of Sudbury, \$10.3 million of debt in communities that had no debt previously. You talk in this House about being accountable to the taxpayers in Sudbury and northern Ontario, when you've saddled us with that type of enormous debt to start off our new municipality?

**Mr Christopherson:** It's my pleasure to respond to the comments of the members from London West and Durham.

Let me say to the member for Durham that I think earlier he was referring to the Prime Minister when he mentioned 37 years, and I know that you were going to correct your own record. I'll save you the trouble. But I've got to say through you, Speaker, for the life of me, I can't understand why, in defence of your own throne speech, you would even utter the word "golf," given the current climate and given the current politics that are spinning around here. So I'm pleased to correct your record for you, but I've got to tell you, it leaves me perplexed why you think that's a winning piece of ground for you to move to.

You talk about fiscal responsibility. Fiscal responsibility is really easy when you say to all your funding partners, "Here's more responsibility and less money"—easy for you, because you get the sweetheart end of that deal. You don't have those services to provide for any longer and you've got a reduced cost. Beautiful. But if you're the municipality or the school board or the hospital board or, heaven forbid, a community service that helps people in the community, there is nothing responsible, fiscal or otherwise, about these kinds of actions.

I want to remind the member, when he talks about deficits, that we now have a bigger debt in this province than when you took power. Why? Because you had to

borrow the money to pay for your tax cut. He can play all the shell games about whether or not that's the direct money, but the bottom line is you cut \$6 billion in revenue to the province of Ontario and you're going to have to find savings to pay for it, and in that case you borrowed money by letting the debt increase.

Why don't you start talking about the health deficit, the education deficit and the environmental protection deficit?

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** I'd like to respond to the members from London West and Durham, and particularly the member from London West, who spent most of the time he spoke dealing with the Crime Control Commission, of which he was one of the original members when this commission was first established some time ago. I must say that it's an honour for me to sit on that commission, along with Mr Tascona, the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford.

Many of the comments had to do with the announcement that was made today by different ministers: the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, the Minister of Correctional Services and I believe Mr Jackson as well. They commented with respect to step 19, which talks about enhancing community safety and victims' rights, which is dealt with in the throne speech.

Just to repeat what the government intends to do, the plan is now clear with respect to this item: "The government will introduce 21st-century solutions, ranging from innovative civil tools to vigorous crown prosecutions, to respond to the modern challenges presented by organized crime." The Attorney General is introducing legislation on that specific item.

"The government will introduce legislation to protect children caught in the misery of prostitution." I'm sure the member from Sudbury will be interested in that legislation.

It will "introduce legislation that would permit victims to participate in the parole hearings of those who wronged them."

"The successful strict discipline program will be extended to adult offenders and more young offenders."

"The government will link all shelters and rape crisis centres to the information technology of Ontario's justice system."

It will act to streamline the eviction of tenants convicted of dealing drugs—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** I am pleased to stand today in the House and offer some comments on the remarks that were made by the members for London West and Durham.

I have to say that I believe I speak on behalf of the residents of my riding who are quite indignant about the fact that we've had to wait since December 20, 1999, to hear the Premier of this province account in this House for the policies or the lack of direction that his government has provided to the people of the province.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** It's 133 days.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** My colleague has indicated it's 133 days. That's a very long wait.

I know the people of my riding are so very disappointed about a number of things that were not included in the throne speech. One issue that was not even mentioned was agriculture. I come from a rural part of Ontario. The farmers and the municipal representatives across the province were promised by Mike Harris that he would introduce amendments to the Farm Practices Protection Act, and where are they? They were supposed to happen a year ago. They were supposed to happen last fall.

Municipalities and farmers need that legislation. They are looking to this government for direction and support in terms of how to manage farms, and what do they get from this government in the throne speech? An indication as to when this legislation will be introduced in the House? They have received nothing. The word "agriculture" does not even appear in the throne speech. The second-largest industry in the province of Ontario has been totally overlooked by this throne speech and, I would suggest, this government. I say shame on you to stand in the House and suggest that you're presenting direction to the people of the province when you're totally ignoring an important and significant sector.

1720

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr O'Toole:** In response, I really have to remark on the member for London West, as well as Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, really exemplary members of the Crime Control Commission. We're in good hands.

I do want to put on the record clearly that I did refer to the Prime Minister as the Premier. In fact, we all know that he had 37 years in federal politics, and the Grand-Mère affair doesn't really stick with him. I can't understand this; maybe it's the Liberal press.

But there are two important issues that the member for, I believe it is, Hamilton West mentioned that I think need to be briefly addressed, and that was the whole issue with respect to health care. Frances Lankin started it under the acute care study, which I took part in as a regional councillor. It ended up with the primary care reform model that was brought forward by Dr Wendy Graham; the Health Services Restructuring Commission. This is not new. If anyone's been paying attention, everyone, including Roy Romanow, recognizes, and finally our Prime Minister does—they skipped it in the federal election. They said there were no problems there. So it's a long-overdue debate that needs to occur here. We all need to be listening.

But also with respect to education reform—it was mentioned briefly, as well—I really have to look again to the NDP. They were starting to turn the corner. They started the Royal Commission on Learning, For the Love of Learning, and the education reforms that David Cooke has brought forward are proof that we deliver on what are good ideas. I don't think any of us here have a corner on good ideas.



But the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington absolutely has it wrong. Unfortunately, she wasn't here from 1995 to 1999. She forgets that we've already dealt with the Farming and Food Production Protection Act. Business activities were clearly modified in that.

But it really comes down to that actions speak louder than words. In fact, if you were to look at the commitment that Minister Coburn, and before him, Mr Harde-man, and before that, Noble Villeneuve—they made a complete commitment to agriculture, as I do.

#### **The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?**

**Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** I would like to share my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands and the member for Thunder Bay-Superior North. I do appreciate the time to comment on the throne speech for working families in our community.

Over the past few years, residents have contacted me on the state of health care, the problems in education, municipal downloading and agriculture. Just to talk a little bit about what the previous speaker had said about agriculture, I've been around here for a while and I remember your campaign promises. I remember what you said: not one penny from agriculture. How much was it cut? By 50%. So I hope the member remembers that.

I know the residents of my community are worrying about their health care system. In an interview prior to the 1995 election on Global TV with Robert Fisher, when the Premier was asked about hospital closing and health care, the then Leader of the Opposition said, "You know, Robert, it's not my plan to close hospitals." Well, you know what happened. The health care restructuring breezed into communities like ours. They closed the one hospital and made it into a long-term-care facility, and the other one would have to have extensive renovations. The community had to sit back and watch their price tag increase by millions and millions of dollars.

It is going to be an impossible challenge for our community to raise that kind of money. The hospital isn't the only organization or municipality trying to raise funds, which isn't possible, because the hospital isn't the only club or hospital or facility that's trying to raise money in our community. Working families in our community have to look after themselves first. They don't have a lot of money to give for hospital restructuring.

It has always been my opinion that both hospitals in our community should remain open and operate under one administration and one board of directors until the community has the resources to build a new hospital on a new site, and that opinion is shared by most of the residents of our community. Unfortunately, the throne speech unveiled by the government didn't even mention restructuring costs. Instead, it looked at two-tier medicare. The working families deserve to have access to universal health care.

Every Friday, my office is being picketed by a lady who needs dialysis treatment and has to travel to Brock-

ville three times a week—her name is Lynn Briere—along with many others in my community.

There's one thing the residents of Ontario shouldn't forget: the tax breaks they're all getting are all borrowed money and the debt continues to rise. That's very hard to tell a lot of Tories.

The throne speech also did not come up with solutions for the education system and the funding formula. The Upper Canada District School Board is geographically one of the largest boards in Ontario. It covers 12,000 square kilometres, which is 18 times the size of the Toronto district board. Our board includes eight different counties but only one town that's large enough to be considered a city.

Our board is predominately rural in composition, yet it does not qualify for rural and remote funding under the current funding formula. Between 1995-96 and 2000-01, the Upper Canada District School Board received approximately \$836 less per student. My office was told a year ago that the government was going to examine the rural funding formula. To date, nothing has been done. As a result of the funding formula, the Upper Canada District School Board is forced to make very tough decisions, which do not make the residents of our community very happy.

The downloading and health care are the biggest issues in my riding. But then we get to the municipal downloading that continues to have a deep impact on our communities. The province has downloaded things like highways, social housing, social services and land ambulance services, and it has put a financial burden on our community.

Roads and bridges are in disrepair, and perhaps you will pay at a later date for the money that's not being spent on these roads and bridges now. In my riding, there are currently six overpasses that are in need of repair. Three of these overpasses are in terrible condition, and the municipality had no choice but to put in load limits and limit traffic. These bridges pose a significant public safety hazard as they're reduced to one lane. This means fire trucks cannot cross these bridges; they have to take alternative routes. It won't be too long before we have a bad accident or a death in our community.

I could go on and on. I'd like to speak a little bit more about agriculture, which was not mentioned at all in the throne speech, although I do thank the minister for putting the \$90 million into agriculture, which he did after the previous ministers and the previous government cut the agriculture funding by 50%.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I'm glad to have an opportunity to say a few words as well in response to the speech from the throne. May I begin by saying that I am very indebted and have great gratitude to the constituents I serve for the input they give me on a regular basis.

As you know, Thunder Bay-Superior North is a large riding with a number of hard-working families with very diverse needs. What the constituents I represent probably have in common—I think I can say this—is a desire to

improve the economy of our region and certainly to strengthen our industries and work together to improve our quality of life. I must tell you that I was not that surprised by the comments I received about the throne speech, which were of great disappointment. As is so often the case, the specific needs of northern Ontario are very rarely mentioned.

1730

I will acknowledge there was one reference to the needs of rural and northern Ontario in this political striptease of a speech, which made reference to improving the regional economies and dealing with some of the inadequacies of the northern and rural parts of the province, which will be revealed on May 7. The one thing we've all discovered as we watch these announcements come out is that the details are not forthcoming. The promises are made, and as usual they are broken. Certainly the details we're looking for are not there.

But I want to use my time, if I may, perhaps referring specifically to some of the issues that concern my constituents that weren't in the throne speech. It's difficult to begin anywhere other than the northern health travel grant, a source of great discontent to all northerners which was not even mentioned in the throne speech. We have been fighting for several years, certainly since the second mandate of this government, to try to get the attention of this government to recognize how unfairly they are treating northerners in relation to the discrimination of the northern health travel grant. We have done everything we can in terms of petitions, signed by 20,000 people, basically asking the government to at least acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the program. We pressed the government to at least do a review of the northern health travel grant.

After much effort we were finally successful, if that's the right word, in getting the previous Minister of Health to actually do a review of the northern health travel grant. What's interesting about that, of course, is that the review was completed. I suspect the review acknowledged the inadequacy of the program, and I suspect the review basically recommended that indeed major improvements need to be made to the northern health travel grant, but it sat on the minister's table. Now we have a new minister in place who has actually denied knowledge of the report even being in existence, which is absolutely stunning.

Certainly that is an area where we have seen what happens. We have seen that the government has agreed they must send cancer patients—they have long waiting lists—to various parts of the world, Thunder Bay included, where the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre is, and pay 100% of their costs. We certainly feel for those patients. But while they're sitting in the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre getting all their costs paid—their travel, accommodation and meals—there are also patients from my constituency, from a variety of places, who are receiving service and also have to travel but are not receiving that benefit. That is very upsetting.

I can only say to the Minister of Health, and certainly to the Premier, that we will not accept this. This is a

battle we've been fighting and, again, it's appalling that it was not mentioned in the throne speech at all. We certainly look forward to perhaps having in the budget some acknowledgement that there needs to be a change, although I must admit we're less optimistic than we might have been in light of the fact that the Minister of Health could not even recall a report was being done.

There are so many other issues I want to address, and I have very little time left; I want to leave lots of time for the member for Kingston and the Islands. Let me address some of the transportation issues which actually weren't addressed as well. The Minister of Transportation made a statement in the House a couple of days ago, describing it as Smart Growth, in terms of some of the things they want to do in a transportation vein. He made great reference to some of the needs on the 400-series highways, to the need to open up roads more quickly after accidents—I hope he will also include the north in those discussions, because certainly it's a huge issue in Thunder Bay-Superior North as well—but made no reference to any of the needs of the north.

The fact is that one of the real frustrations we feel, particularly in northwestern Ontario, is that we simply do not get our fair share of funding for highway infrastructure improvements. We have been battling for some time to get the government, the provincial ministry, to provide funds on a regular basis so we can at least twin the highway between Thunder Bay and Nipigon, a project on which there was agreement it was needed well over 10 years ago. The previous government put some funds into it up to about 1995. This government has done nothing at all, and they seem to not acknowledge that at all. We had a major discussion in Thunder Bay recently related to the Shabagua Expressway, another important need. These are things we didn't see, and these are things we hope to see and we're counting on that.

As my time winds down, let me make reference to one other issue, and my colleague from Stormont-Dundas made reference to it too. It was the issue of the funding formula for schools.

The capital costs for infrastructure improvements in my riding are extraordinarily large. The fact is the funding formula puts no value on that at all. We have an extraordinary example with St Edward school in Nipigon, where we need a brand new school, but because of the fact it's a low-growth board we are not going to be able to get the funds to do that. That is absolutely crucial. So again we're seeing that the province is not acknowledging the specific needs in northern Ontario. This is of great frustration to those of us from the north, of great frustration to my constituents.

We will continue to push the issue. We look forward to seeing the Minister of Northern Development and Mines at the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association meeting in Fort Frances this coming weekend and hopefully he will provide details of his announcement, which is planned for May 7. Perhaps he'll let us know a little bit about it beforehand and maybe he'll make some other commitments, including confirmation that the



medical school that they have committed to developing in the north will also include Thunder Bay and Lakehead University as a co-partner and a co-location.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I just have a few minutes left to deal with the throne speech.

First of all, let it be said and known that we've been away from this House for about 120 days, since just before Christmas, when we should have been here in March and early April in order to deal with the issues that we have confronting us in this province.

What is government all about? Government should be about lifting people's hopes and aspirations, about levelling the playing field for those, for example, who are looking for education, our young people mainly but also others in our society, so that everyone can reach the maximum of their own potential. Government should be about providing necessary health care for those individuals who need it, in a publicly administered and a publicly delivered way. That's what people are looking for. That's what we are known for in this province and in this country. That's why the United Nations regards us as the best country in the world to live in. That's what government ought to be about and should be about. What's in this throne speech about that? What speaks to the higher aspirations and hopes of people in this province? Nothing at all.

There's nothing that deals with the special needs of certain individuals in our society. Over the past two or three months, I've had a number of occasions to meet with different groups in my community, as many members do, particularly when the House doesn't sit. I had an opportunity to meet with individuals at the Kingston and District Association for Community Living and some of the parents who are involved with that association, and also with parents who have autistic children, the parent advocates for persuasive development disorders. When you see what these individuals go through on a day-to-day basis, who are looking for a little bit of help from different organizations, from government, particularly once these children are out of school, once they reach the age of 21 and they can no longer benefit from the school system, and the kind of lives that these people lead as a result of having one of these children at home whom they want to take care of etc, I say to myself, isn't it a lot better to spend a little bit of that tax cut money that we all want and that we all like, to deal with the problems that those people face on a day-to-day basis?

The time isn't enough to go through the litany of documentation that I've received from these people and the pleading that they do on an ongoing basis with the Ministry of Health, with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and it all leads to nothing. Yes, every now and then if somebody shouts long enough or pleads their case vigorously enough, there will be some help for them, but that's not the way it should be. Those individuals need help. Many other individuals need help as well.

Let me just read you some statistics. These come from Alan McWhorter, the executive director of the Kingston and District Association for Community Living. He states that in our little area of Kingston and Frontenac county, "There are ... 33 individuals in urgent need of day programs to which will be added the 11 young adults leaving school this spring. The resources available are already overextended. Some among the current 33 have been waiting for as long as eight years"—eight years, as the pressures and priorities committee for Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, a committee made up of different social agencies, worked to try to help these individuals. Why doesn't the throne speech speak to that? Why doesn't the throne speech speak to the fact that, depending upon whose figures you want to use, either the government's own or other organizations', we have a shortage of somewhere between 500 to 800 family physicians in this province? All over the province there are over 100 under-served communities right now.

1740

What's the government's response? Well, they'll add 40 more spots in medical schools that will take at least seven years to realize the benefit from. Why don't we take advantage of those 200 to 300 foreign-trained doctors who are driving cabs or doing other work in this province? Why don't we take advantage of those individuals, and fast-track them into a system whereby, if they have the qualifications to be a physician in our province and they meet our standards, we approve these people? Why do we make it so difficult?

The answer certainly isn't, "Well, it's the OMA's problem. It's the College of Physicians and Surgeons' problem." The government deals with those agencies on an ongoing basis. If there were a real willingness to deal with the doctor shortage situation, Speaker, you and I know that something would happen about that today.

What about all those students who are coming through the double cohort system? There are going to be 88,000 additional students as a result of the OAC year being terminated, and everybody in grades 12 and 13 looking for university and college spaces at the same time, added to the system in the year 2003. What does the minister say to that? I have this in a letter from her that was addressed to one of my constituents: that apparently 23% of these people can be placed.

There are going to be about 50,000 students who simply will not be placed because of lack of places in our universities and colleges once the double cohort system hits us in the year 2003. I've got a document here that comes right off the Web site for the Ontario Colleges Network that indicates that the double cohort issue will be with us for at least five years before all the students can be accommodated.

Now, that doesn't mean that just those students who are graduating in 2003 will be accommodated over five years; no, because if some of them take places of students who graduate after that, they're obviously going to bounce those students out of that particular year. The bottom line is that in another two years between 50,000

students in this province will not be able to be accommodated by our college and university system and they may very well end up being the lost generation.

Why doesn't the throne speech deal with those everyday problems that the working families in Ontario face on a day-to-day basis? This throne speech is totally devoid of dealing with the real issues Ontarians face on a day-to-day basis.

**Mr Christopherson:** In responding to the comments of the members from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, Thunder Bay-Superior North, and Kingston and the Islands, let me deal with the member for Kingston and the Islands first.

He talks, rightly, about health care and the problems that exist in health care. I would ratchet it up one more degree, if you will, and say that there's clearly a crisis in the health care system. Earlier today the government had the audacity to talk about nurses. Well, one of the flash points in this crisis is nurses. It's been mentioned earlier during question period that throughout a number of communities across the province, my own, Hamilton, included, there were a number of information picket lines put up by nurses to draw attention to what's happening on the front line of the health care system.

Let's remember that the ability of this government to say, "Well, that's the responsibility of the hospital board," doesn't tell, at all, the whole story. The fact of the matter is that this government, by and large, fired the thousands of nurses that we lost. Having spent all that money, hundreds of millions of dollars on severance, you're now spending millions of dollars trying to entice these nurses back, many of whom have left not only the province but the country.

You did that. Those were your measures. The Liberals aren't much better, because in the last election they talked about laying off public servants to the tune that I believe was a couple of thousand people less. But the whole idea of downsizing the public sector was clear for them too. The fact of the matter is that the only way we're going to have the kind of health care that we deserve and that, quite frankly, we've had in the past is to make sure the funding is there. Privatizing is about taking care of your friends, not taking care of public health.

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** It is a pleasure to be able to rise and comment on some of the comments that were made by the members from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, Kingston and the Islands, and Thunder Bay-Superior North. I want to concentrate, in the brief time that I have, on some of the remarks that were made by the member from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, because in those remarks I think there were some underlying issues that were not addressed.

Much of the remarks dealt with the various lists of programs that had been in place in his community. But what he failed to talk about, which is crucial to this discussion, is the fact that these were not paid for; they were in fact the whole tradition of looking at deficit financing. It was that issue of deficit financing that meant that by 1995 the taxpayers of this province recognized

that \$1 million more per hour was being spent. It is important to see that in the context of those remarks.

What we needed to do then was recognize the fact that all those programs were doing was simply making sure that for the future we would be carrying on the debt and the mortgaging of our future. It has been the work of this government to look at making those hard decisions of where we could move to make sure that we have the balanced budget we do.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I congratulate my colleagues who spoke here and outlined clearly some of the weaknesses in the throne speech that we've all talked about in the last few days. The point I want to talk about for a minute is in my own community: what the throne speech lacked with regard to funding, transitional funding and downloading funding. As you know, when the government brought in the legislation where a number of municipalities changed from regional government to one-tier government, they also promised there'd be transitional funding. In Hamilton they've let us down once again.

The budget process in the new city of Hamilton is underway. As a result of the downloading, as a result of being shortchanged by the Harris government when it comes to transitional funding, we are looking at cuts to health programs in Hamilton. We are looking at increases in bus rates. We are looking at increases in transportation service costs for the disabled in our community. We are looking at shutting down community pools. We are looking at a massive increase in the number of user fees. And we are looking at tax hikes. That is the reality of the Mike Harris downloading on to the city of Hamilton.

They downloaded social housing. There was a report two years ago in the city that showed that the cost of upgrading the current stock to bring it up to standard would be about \$15 million. What does the Harris government give us? Less than \$2 million. Another \$13 million has to be made up from the local tax base.

So we are going to see more cuts to local services. We are going to see higher user fees. We are going to see user fees on the disabled when it comes to transportation being increased even further. We are going to see bus transportation fees going up. We are going to see community pools being shut down. We are going to see health departments shutting down programs. And we are going to see the taxpayers of Hamilton picking up programs and costs because the Mike Harris government decides that they believe municipalities should pay for social housing, for welfare, all the costs that traditionally have been provincial responsibility.

I'm disappointed the throne speech didn't do that. I think the citizens of the city of Hamilton, when they get the tax bill and the increase this year and the cuts in services, have to thank Mike Harris's agenda.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I feel very bad that the Conservative member doesn't get an opportunity to respond. I'm really distressed about that. I'll have a sleepless night, I just want you to know.

I want to take this opportunity to comment on the speech given by the member from Kingston. One of the



points he started to raise but didn't quite go all the way on, and I'd like to hear his comments on, is this whole situation that we have now in Ontario where the government is trying to make us believe they've got to make a number of changes in health care. The Premier was out musing that he wants to go out and privatize parts of our health care system that have always been under the public system. His argument is, "The system is broken. It's in chaos. We need to fix it. There's a big problem." They make the same kind of argument in education. They say, "Oh, we've got to do all these changes in education because there are all these things that are wrong with the system etc." I just want to hear him comment on who he thinks put the system into chaos in the first place. I would argue it's the government, by underfunding our education system, our health system and municipalities, that has thrown that whole sector into turmoil, and now the government is using that as a backdrop, the turmoil they created, as the reason they've got to go out and make all these changes.

1750

I think it's interesting and I would want to hear him comment on the comments John Snobelen made when he was first elected in 1995. John Snobelen said, "We will create a crisis in education in order to create the backdrop to create the ideological changes we want to make to the system." I always thought he should have been fired from cabinet. Do you know why? Because he divulged a cabinet secret. I believe it was the plan, I say to those people watching and the members in this assembly. I want to hear the member from Kingston and the Islands comment on whether he really believes, as I do, that it was intentional, that the government set out to create a crisis in all of our public institutions so they can go out and make the ideological changes they are now making.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Gerretsen:** I'd like to thank all the members for responding to what the three of us had to say. But let me just say this with respect to the last comment made by the member from Timmins. I think a lot of people would agree that one of the reasons health care and education in this province are in the state of chaos they're in is so that privatization can take place. I'm positive that's part of the agenda. But I'd rather not deal with that.

I'd rather deal with the problems that are out there right now. I'd rather deal with what we can do as the Legislative Assembly so that Ontarians will get an equal chance at education, so that Ontarians will get health care when and if they need it for themselves and their family in a publicly administered and publicly funded way. Those are the issues the people of Ontario care about. We can do all sorts of analyses as to why it's being done, we can all have our opinions on it, but let's deal with the problems that are really out there and let's deal with the issues.

One of the things I did like about the throne speech was that they were going to do something about the Audit Act. Once again I urge the members of this House to pass my private member's bill. Yes, the member from

Niagara Falls had a somewhat similar bill in 1996. I introduced this bill before Christmas this year. The throne speech said you were going to make amendments to the Audit Act. These amendments have been vetted by the Provincial Auditor, who likes the fact that he will then have the authority to go after 60% of the money that's being transferred from the provinces to the various transfer agents right now. Pass this bill, because I fear, from the statements that were made yesterday, that you're not going to do that. Three ministers spoke about accountability here yesterday. They talked about all sorts of report cards that will just add more red tape to the system, but you are not making the changes to the Audit Act that are required. I urge you to support this bill and do what it says—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Further debate?

*Applause.*

**Mr Christopherson:** Everyone should know that the House is applauding because I only get four and a half minutes. In that whole four and a half minutes, let me focus on the issue of accountability. I want to talk about a couple of examples of things that have happened in Hamilton that speak, in my mind, the opposite of what you're saying your government is all about in terms of accountability.

I've mentioned earlier, standing here, that this government has downloaded on to all the funding partners they have. As well as adding responsibilities to them, they've also cut the money they've received. By doing that in all the various ministries and areas where they have a partnership, they've collected all the money they need to give their very wealthy friends a whole big whack of tax money through tax cuts.

I want to point out that in Hamilton we watched over the last few years a number of serious conflicts that have taken place in the community, between different parts of our community, that never should have happened; for instance, the elementary teachers' lockout last fall. The fact of the matter is that what we ended up with in our community was the school board and the trustees pitted against the teachers, but in reality it was you who caused that labour strife. You caused it by your funding formula. I want to say very clearly that it made it very difficult, because the ultimate culprits are here at Queen's Park.

What we saw in our papers, in our daily media, was the trustees and the teachers going through the verbal battles one goes through when you go through these labour disputes, but what hurt was to watch it happen and know that it was happening because of what you did. And you knew it too; you knew it all along.

I'll give you another example. We had a very prolonged labour dispute with the bus drivers, with the HSR, the Hamilton Street Railway, and our then regional council. Again we saw working people in Hamilton pitted against their local government, daily verbally attacking one another, as happens. The reality is that your underfunding and downloading on to the municipality put the fiscal pressure on the local council, which made it very difficult for them to negotiate the very legitimate demands those bus drivers were making.

We watched all this conflict take place in our community, and you stood back and said, "We're the tax cutters. We're the ones who saved everybody money." All you did was take your responsibility and hand it down to somebody else and let them fight your battles. I ask the government, where is the accountability in that? Where is the accountability in giving your responsibility to someone else and not even giving them enough money to do it?

One more example; I've got time for the last example. What happens when we finally bell the cat? When the VON went on strike, they made it clear that it wasn't their employer they were striking against and they said it wasn't the CCAC, which is the local funder. Those brave, mostly women, at the VON said, "This strike is against the government." Do you know what happened when they belled that cat? Hamiltonians rallied around those VON workers and at the end of the day this government was shamed into providing at least some money to go toward resolving that labour dispute. That's what happens when you finally become exposed for what you're really doing.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** John, you may not like the fact that I'm being loud, but I want to tell you that when you live in Hamilton and the other communities and watch these fights and know they shouldn't be happening, it's infuriating, and it's all because you've decided that you're going to be the tax cutters and you're going to be fiscally responsible and give real governance down to local government and other local responsibilities, pitting people in our communities one against another, when at the end of the day you're the one who—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

On Monday, April 23, 2001, Mr Miller moved, seconded by Mr Arnott, that a humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

"To the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has addressed to us."

On Wednesday April 25, 2001, Mr Hampton moved:

That the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne be amended by adding the following thereto:

That the address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by striking out all the words after "We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled...", and substituting the following:

"deplore the Tory government's intention to sell Ontario's secure public electricity provider to the highest bidder, while it squanders the education of our children and bankrupts our health care system; and

"Whereas this government caters to its big business friends in the corporate, for-profit energy sector, shields polluters from public scrutiny and inflicts sky-high rate hikes on vulnerable electricity consumers; and

"Whereas this government has ignored its own report, abandoning school-aged children by failing to provide extra-curricular activities; and

"Whereas this government allows special interest groups like the Ontario Medical Association to dictate health care policy that favours pay raises for doctors instead of ensuring province-wide access to publicly-funded health care services provided by salaried medical teams; and

"Whereas this government continues to recklessly endanger the environment by slashing the environment ministry's staff and budget, risking the security of Ontario's water supply; and

"Whereas the Conservatives condemn low-income families to living in unsafe, unhealthy over-priced housing by failing to build affordable housing and removing rent controls; and

"Whereas this government forces people to work 60-hour weeks in order to keep their jobs;

"Therefore this House rejects the Tories' 'accountability' agenda and demands that the government apologize to Ontarians who have suffered chaos in their schools and hospitals, inequality at their workplaces, and unsafe water and air. The House demands that the government maintain a publicly-owned electricity supply and abandon its agenda to privatize water and sewage systems. It demands that the government reform primary care, end competitive bidding practices and restore quality, publicly-funded home care services in Ontario. This government must cease its attack on the poor by ending the 60-hour work week, by raising the minimum wage immediately to \$7.50 an hour, by ending the clawback of the federal child tax benefit, and by investing in safe, affordable, licensed child care services for working families."

All those in favour of Mr Hampton's motion will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members.

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), this vote will be deferred until deferred votes on May 2, 2001.

It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 1803.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Amsterdam-Dundas-	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Amherst-Burnhamthorpe		Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Bay of Quinte	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Hastings-Frontenac-	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Lennox and Addington	
Brimley		Huron-Bruce	<b>Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Health and Long-Term Care) / ministre sans portefeuille (Santé et Soins de longue durée)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)		Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brampton West-Mississauga /	<b>Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony</b> (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée		
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston and the Islands /	
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kingston et les îles	
Burlington	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b> (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
	Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Kitchener-Waterloo	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)		Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lanark-Carleton	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b> (PC)
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)		Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Don Valley West / -Ouest	<b>Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b> (PC) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
	Solicitor General / solliciteur général		<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b> (PC)
Dufferin-Peel-	Tilson, David (PC)	London North Centre /	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Wellington-Grey		London-Centre-Nord	Wood, Bob (PC)
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)		Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	London West / -Ouest	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b> (PC)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	London-Fanshawe	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Erie-Lincoln	<b>Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim</b> (PC)	Markham	
	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs		<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b> (PC)
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC)		DeFaria, Carl (PC)
	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Mississauga East / -Est	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b> (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	<b>Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda</b> (PC)		
	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)		
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC)		
	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepean-Carleton	<b>Baird, Hon / L'hon John R.</b> (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Scarborough East / -Est Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Gilchrist, Steve (PC) <b>Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan</b> (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b> (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Simcoe-Grey	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Oak Ridges	<b>Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oakville	<b>Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	Stoney Creek	<b>Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	<b>Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Thornhill	Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b> (PC) Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Whitby-Ajax	<b>Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	<b>Young, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
		Vaughan-King-Aurora	Vacant

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling,  
Gilles Bisson, Alvin Curling,  
Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli,  
Norm Miller, John R. O'Toole,  
Steve Peters, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Finance and economic affairs /  
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Marcel Beaubien  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Doug Galt  
Marcel Beaubien, David Christopherson,  
Doug Galt, Ernie Hardeman, Monte Kwinter,  
John O'Toole, Gerry Phillips, Joseph Spina  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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John Hastings, Shelley Martel, Bart Maves,  
Julia Munro, Richard Patten  
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**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Frances Lankin  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop  
Gilles Bisson, Garfield Dunlop,  
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Frances Lankin,  
Frank Mazzilli, Ted McMeekin, Bill Murdoch  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

# CONTENTS

Tuesday 1 May 2001

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Events in Flamborough and Ancaster</b>	
Mr McMeekin .....	319
<b>Novatronics</b>	
Mr Johnson .....	319
<b>Nurses</b>	
Mr Patten .....	319
<b>Protection of resources</b>	
Mr Marchese .....	320
<b>Prisoner work program</b>	
Mr Dunlop .....	320
<b>Leader of the Opposition</b>	
Mr Duncan .....	320
<b>Violence against women</b>	
Mrs Munro .....	320
<b>Government accountability</b>	
Mr Smitherman .....	321
<b>Crime prevention</b>	
Mr Maves .....	321

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on finance and economic affairs</b>	
Mr Beaubien .....	321
Debate adjourned .....	321

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Remedies for Organized Crime and Other Unlawful Activities Act, 2001, Bill 30, Mr Young</b>	
Agreed to .....	322
Mr Young .....	322
<b>Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2001, Bill 31, Ms Martel</b>	
Agreed to .....	322
Ms Martel .....	322

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Community safety</b>	
Mr Young .....	322
Mr Turnbull .....	323
Mr Sampson .....	324
Mr Bryant .....	325
Mr Levac .....	326
Mr Kormos .....	326
<b>Equal opportunity</b>	
Mr Jackson .....	324
Mr Parsons .....	325

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Golf tournaments</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	328
Mr Harris .....	328, 333
Mr Ramsay .....	332

## Class size

Mr McGuinty .....	329
Mrs Ecker .....	329

## Competitive electricity market

Mr Hampton .....	330
Mr Harris .....	330

## Property taxation

Mr Hampton .....	331
Mr Harris .....	331

## Cabinet Office staffing

Mr McGuinty .....	331
Mr Harris .....	331

## Violence against women

Mrs Munro .....	332
Mr Baird .....	332

## Deer damage

Mr Murdoch .....	333
Mr Coburn .....	333

## Nurses

Mrs Lankin .....	334
Mr Clement .....	334

## Premier's attendance

Mr Smitherman .....	334
Mr Harris .....	335

## Young offenders

Mr Dunlop .....	335
Mr Sampson .....	335

## Medical school

Mr Crozier .....	336
Mr Clement .....	336

## Community safety

Mr O'Toole .....	336
Mr Turnbull .....	336

## Rail service

Mr Bisson .....	337
Mr Harris .....	337

## Doctor shortage

Mr Bradley .....	337
Mr Harris .....	337
Mr Clement .....	338

## PETITIONS

### School facilities

Mr Cleary .....	338
-----------------	-----

### Occupational health and safety

Mr Christopherson .....	338, 339
-------------------------	----------

### Protection of minors

Mr Wood .....	338
---------------	-----

### White birch plant

Mr Ramsay .....	338
-----------------	-----

### Doctor shortage

Mr Marchese .....	339
-------------------	-----

### Paper sludge

Mr O'Toole .....	339
------------------	-----

## Hospital restructuring

Mr Parsons .....	339
Mr Galt .....	340

## Probation and parole officers

Mr Levac .....	340
----------------	-----

## Employment standards

Mr Christopherson .....	340
-------------------------	-----

## Horse riding safety

Mrs Molinari .....	340
--------------------	-----

## Social audit

Mr Gravelle .....	341
-------------------	-----

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Unanimous consent

Mr Stockwell .....	339
The Acting Speaker .....	339

## THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Mrs Molinari .....	339
Mr Maves .....	343, 346, 350
Mrs Bountrogianni .....	344, 347
Mr Christopherson .....	345, 349, 353, 358, 359
Mr Gill .....	345
Mr Gerretsen .....	345, 357, 359
Mr Sergio .....	346, 350
Mr Wood .....	349, 350
Mr Bartolucci .....	349, 353
Mr O'Toole .....	352, 354
Mr Tilson .....	354
Mrs Dombrowsky .....	354
Mr Cleary .....	355
Mr Gravelle .....	355
Mrs Munro .....	358
Mr Agostino .....	358
Mr Bisson .....	359
Debate deemed adjourned .....	360

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2001

## PREMIÈRE LECTURE

### Loi de 2001 sur les recours

#### pour crime organisé et

#### autres activités illégales,

#### projet de loi 30, M. Young

Adoptée .....

322

### Loi de 2000 modifiant la Loi sur les relations de travail,

#### projet de loi 31, M<sup>me</sup> Martel

Adoptée .....

322





**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

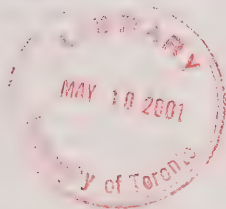
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
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(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 2 May 2001**

**Mercredi 2 mai 2001**



Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### DENNIS REDMAN

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** I rise in the House today to honour a true hero, Captain Dennis Redman of the St Thomas professional firefighters, who died January 5 this year in the line of duty, battling an early-morning blaze that threatened the lives of senior citizens and residents with disabilities in a 102-unit apartment complex.

As he did so often throughout his 20-year career with the St Thomas Fire Department, Captain Redman fought seemingly insurmountable odds. As blinding snow and dense smoke filled the early morning air, he fought alongside his comrades to save the lives of sleeping residents, most unaware of the flames that consumed their home. It was a courageous battle that saved all but two people, yet ultimately cost Captain Redman his life.

Captain Redman's heroism spread well beyond the confines of the city of St Thomas. Those who honoured this dedicated firefighter four days later travelled from centres throughout Canada and the United States. Thousands lined city streets to parade to an overflowing arena for the funeral service.

Captain Redman was indeed a man of commitment and extraordinary courage who touched the lives of all who knew him and knew of him. But perhaps more poignantly, as his daughter Nicole Marie said, "He was an ordinary man who did extraordinary things." We are all richer for having known him, and our thoughts and prayers go out to the Redman family, as our thoughts and prayers today go out to the family of Captain Patrick Joseph Carey, who died in the line of duty.

#### DECORUM IN CHAMBER

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I stand today in the interest of all elected members of this Legislature and indeed all citizens of Ontario. Specifically, the lack of decorum and respect in this Legislative Assembly exhibited recently causes me and my constituents of Durham great concern.

I need only point to three recent incidents to make my point: first, the accusation on April 30 against the honourable Premier by the member from Timiskaming-

Cochrane; second, the past statement made by the leader of the official opposition against the honourable Minister of Health, Tony Clement; finally, the actions of the member from Sault Ste Marie in making political statements while in the chair as Deputy Speaker on December 19.

I wish to remind all members of the Legislative Assembly that these incidents—the actions of the official opposition and third party—violate, if not the rule to the letter, then the principles laid out in section IV, Order and Decorum and Conduct of Members, and section VI, Rules of Debate, of the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

By the day, statements are becoming more and more coarse and more focused on personal attacks. This is not in the interests of serving the citizens of this province. This is not in the interests of our integrity. In the interests of the greater good of the province, we ought to demonstrate the highest level of respect and civility to one another.

I believe that members of the official opposition and members of the third party ought to give careful consideration to the statement widely attributed to Voltaire, but in fact written by Evelyn Beatrice Hall in 1906: "I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

#### WATERFOWL HUNTING

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** My statement today is to the Minister of Natural Resources. About a year ago, you started a process to find an alternate location for the duck hunt at Presqu'île park. I met Monday night with all of the residents of the area in municipal council, who made it very clear that they do not want duck hunters in their backyards for four months a year, they do not want their property expropriated, and they do not want their safety put at risk.

Minister, you committed at the time of the initiation that if there could not be a willing host found to move it to, the hunt would remain at Presqu'île park. I call upon you to honour that commitment. This community does not want the hunt. Please, at this stage, without spending any more public money, end the entire process and leave it where it is. The duck hunting situation was not broken; there was no need to fix it.

However, I am intrigued about the process. The evening of the presentation, we saw a 25-minute video. We saw maps produced. We have seen a team hold consultations for a year. We have seen consultants brought in. Yet on the ODA front there is no one devoted

to spending any time whatsoever to improve the rights and the lot of Ontarians with disabilities. Surely the 1.5 million citizens in Ontario who have disabilities at least rank equally with ducks in Ontario. Let's take the resources that we have and focus them to help the citizens rather than, as your Premier so often indicates, the special-interest groups.

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I rise today to talk about an initiative I'm taking to increase road safety. This afternoon I will be reintroducing my private member's bill entitled An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit persons from riding on the outside of a motor vehicle. Simply referred to as the "outside riders" act, this bill, if passed, will help save lives by putting a ban on riding in the back of pickup trucks.

There are many occasions when riding in the back of a pickup truck is extremely dangerous. In July of last year, two young men from Northumberland were killed when the pickup they were riding in slid off the road, ejecting them from the open box of the truck.

For those with job-related concerns, there are provisions contained in the bill that will allow individuals to travel outside the cab only under controlled circumstances. These include agricultural, construction and municipal services.

I ask all members of this Legislature to support this bill. To show their support, the families of the two young men tragically killed last July have joined us here today. Please join me in welcoming Laurie and Linda Mackey of Baltimore, and John and Judy Lawrence, and Jessica, of Cobourg.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I want to use my time today to urge Attorney General David Young to establish a domestic violence court in Thunder Bay, a court that would meet a pressing regional need.

*Applause.*

**Mr Gravelle:** Thank you. While it is encouraging that the government recognizes the need for this specialized family court service within the province and has in fact already established them in 14 Ontario communities, it is frustrating that Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario have so far been left off the list of those communities. This is particularly frustrating because such a specialized service is truly needed in our region.

Whatever the reasons for the delay, I would like to encourage Minister Young to work directly with the Thunder Bay and District Coordinating Committee Against Domestic Violence, an umbrella group made up of 20 regional agencies that is extremely keen to begin the process of exploring models for a domestic violence court in our community. As the coordinating committee pointed out in their letter last year to then-Attorney General Flaherty, Thunder Bay and district's unique geo-

graphical location, cultural issues and high incidence of domestic violence more than warrant the establishment of such a court in Thunder Bay.

**1340**

Minister, with the nearest such court presently located in North Bay, I trust I do not have to explain to you how truly inaccessible that is to my constituents who want to access this specialized court service. I call on you to include Thunder Bay on your next list of communities to receive a domestic violence court. Please work with our coordinating committee to remove any possible barriers that may be in place so we can ensure that victims of domestic violence in our community and district do not have to leave Thunder Bay to see real justice.

### SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I rise today to inform all members of the House that May is South Asian Heritage Month. The month of May is significant because it was on May 5, 1838, that the first South Asian immigrants arrived in the Americas.

The first South Asians to set foot on Canadian soil were Sikh soldiers serving in the British Army. The Sikh lancers and infantry travelled by train from Montreal to Vancouver on their way back to India, after taking part in the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Queen Victoria in 1897.

While most South Asians came to our country directly from Asia, many came to Canada from places such as Uganda, Kenya, Mauritius, Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Today over three million South Asians live in the Americas, and over half a million choose to live, work and raise their families right here in Ontario.

South Asians in Ontario today are proud Canadians. They work hard, create jobs, and respect the laws. They celebrate their culture and share it with their fellow citizens. By becoming Canadians, South Asians have not lost their identity; they have only added to it.

Ontario's South Asian community provides a living social, political and economic link between our province and many countries around the world. So it is my privilege to join with the Premier, Mike Harris, and all members of this House in declaring May South Asian Heritage Month to commemorate the heritage of the past, to mark the contributions of the present and to help inspire the great promise of the future.

If I may, I have members of the South Asian community in the members' gallery, and I would like to recognize them: Mr Gary Singh, Mohinder Singh, Suresh Thakrar, Jaspal Samra, Ronald Ramdial and Ram Jagessar, who's also president of the Indian Arrival and Heritage Month.

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** Last night, the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board was forced to vote to close seven more schools in our



Catholic system. They were doing that because of the government's funding formula. The parents at Sacred Heart, St Patrick, St Thomas, St Andrew, St Wilfrid, Desantis and St Clare, the students there and the community know that these closures were the result of the government's failed funding formula in education.

There was a time in this province when there were growing communities where the province of Ontario would contribute additional capital monies for new schools in order to preserve and protect and maintain our existing communities. But that all ended. That ended when this government decided it would only fund a certain number of square feet per pupil. What we're left with is the very board where we just ended a five-week strike, which again was the fault of this government's funding formula, now closing seven schools.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** We fund space, not kids.

**Mr Duncan:** We fund space and not kids, as the member for Sudbury says, and that's just the wrong way to do it.

Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have proposed a range of policies that will deal with the problems that we confront in our schools. Working families will look to this leader, Dalton McGuinty, and his party to solve the problems started by the Harris government through its cuts to education and taking resources away from our kids.

#### RAIL SERVICE

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Yesterday, I had an opportunity to pose a question of the Premier in regard to the plight of the ONTC, and specifically the ONR passenger rail service that covers services from Cochrane to Toronto. In that answer yesterday the Premier said that he was listening and intended to listen to the people of the north as to what has to be done in order to save that passenger service that is now in place in northern Ontario.

If that's the case, then he has to listen to what people like Roger Toal said, people like Donald Brisson said, people like the mayor of Hearst, Monsieur Jean-Marie Blier, people like Ben Lefebvre from Iroquois Falls and many other people who were on the Survival Express two weeks ago, who said the first thing that the government has to do is to have a financial commitment to the ONTC in making sure that ONTC stays as a corporation in northeastern Ontario that plays its role of economic development and providing basic infrastructure to northeastern Ontario, that the Premier would listen to the issue of not selling off ONTel, because if you sell ONTel, there goes the money that is made from that corporation, a profitable section of ONTC that would then be lost, by way of cross-subsidization, to services like rail passenger service.

If the Premier is truly listening, he would look at trying to find solutions to strengthen the train. For example, change the schedule—the schedule doesn't work—invest in the infrastructure and help make the

ONR the type of service it should be: promoting economic development, tourism and passenger rail service in northeastern Ontario.

#### HERITAGE CONSERVATION

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** For the past six days, Canada had the honour of hosting His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales during a visit to Canada. While here, Prince Charles honoured the town of Markham with the Prince of Wales Award for its efforts in fostering Markham's built heritage. The award honours a municipal government for an exemplary commitment to the preservation of built heritage within its boundaries. Prince Charles, known for his interest in architecture, recognized Markham's superb efforts in maintaining its heritage buildings.

Despite pressures of rapid growth and development, Markham has done an excellent job of protecting heritage buildings and districts, some dating back to the early 1800s. The town of Markham, first established in 1793, consists of a number of historic settlements, including several in my community of Thornhill. Locations such as Colborne Street, Heintzman House and Red Cottage are important historical sites that the town has preserved and promoted as part of its legacy. They help define the Thornhill and Markham community and serve as important parts of the historic, enjoyable Thornhill Village Festival.

Markham has proven that development with preservation is not an oxymoron and that responsible growth for the future can occur with an eye to history and care for historical sites. I would like to congratulate Mayor Don Cousens and the town of Markham on receiving this most prestigious award for a job well done.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the second report of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### PETROLEUM PRODUCTS PRICE FREEZE ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 SUR LE GEL DU PRIX DE CERTAINS PRODUITS PÉTROLIERS

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act to provide for an interim freeze in the price of certain petroleum products / Projet de loi 32, Loi

prévoyant le gel provisoire du prix de certains produits pétroliers.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This statement will be short because this is the second time I introduced this bill; I introduced it approximately a year ago.

The bill freezes the price of petroleum products at their price on February 14, 1999. The freeze applies from the day the bill comes into force and lasts for 90 days. If the Legislative Assembly is not sitting when the freeze ends, which is often the case, the minister may make an order extending the freeze for another 60 days.

The reality is that this will be the third time a bill like this was introduced. Premier Bill Davis introduced this in the late 1970s when, as Premier, he was concerned about the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario are tired of being hosed at the pumps and they want this government, the Mike Harris government, to do something.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC  
AMENDMENT ACT  
(OUTSIDE RIDERS), 2001  
LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT  
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE  
(PASSAGERS À L'EXTÉRIEUR  
D'UN VÉHICULE)

Mr Galt moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit persons from riding on the outside of a motor vehicle / Projet de loi 33, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour interdire à des personnes de circuler à l'extérieur d'un véhicule automobile.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** It is the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Galt:** I'm introducing this bill to prevent the recurrence of tragic deaths like the ones that so regrettably took place in my riding last July. However, it includes very specific exemptions for agricultural work and other legitimate occupations that require outside riders. I ask that all members support this bill.

1350

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2001  
LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR LA SANTÉ  
ET LA SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL

Mr Agostino moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to increase the penalties for contraventions of the Act and regulations / Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail en vue

d'augmenter les peines en cas d'infraction aux dispositions de la Loi et des règlements.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** If this bill is adopted, it would make this legislation among the toughest in North America when it comes to fines and jail terms for contraventions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act in Ontario. It would increase the fines for individuals from \$25,000 to \$100,000 and the jail terms from one year to two years. It would increase the fines for corporations from \$500,000 to \$1 million. It would also bring in a new provision that would allow for the jailing and fining of up to \$100,000 of officers and directors of corporations that are guilty of violating the Occupational Health and Safety Act in Ontario.

IRISH HERITAGE DAY ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 SUR LE JOUR DU  
PATRIMOINE IRLANDAIS

Mr O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 35, An Act proclaiming Irish Heritage Day / Projet de loi 35, Loi proclamant le Jour du patrimoine irlandais.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

A short statement?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** The bill recognizes the importance and outstanding contribution of the Irish community in its inclusive culture in Ontario. Irish principles and values, such as a strong work ethic, devotion to family and service to community, are integral to the economic prosperity of Ontario, not just in the 21st century but over time. If passed into law, the act will establish March 17, St Patrick's Day, as the day on which the historic legacy of Ontario's Irish community will be commemorated and officially celebrated across the province. Irish heritage is an operative part of the cultural mosaic of Ontario, and indeed Canada. What better day than March 17 for all Ontarians to celebrate being Irish?

TRUTH ABOUT IPPERWASH ACT, 2001

LOI DE 2001 CONCERNANT  
LA VÉRITÉ SUR IPPERWASH

Mr Phillips moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to provide for a public inquiry to discover the truth about events at Ipperwash Provincial Park leading to the death of Dudley George / Projet de loi 36, Loi prévoyant une enquête publique pour découvrir la vérité sur les événements qui se sont produits au parc provincial Ipperwash et qui ont conduit au décès de Dudley George.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?



All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** This bill requires the Premier to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that a commission be appointed to inquire into and report on the death of Dudley George and to make recommendations directed to the avoidance of violence in similar circumstances. The commission is given powers under the Public Inquiries Act. Once the inquiry begins, the commission must make an interim report in six months and a final report in 12 months.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** In February this year, when the Ministry of the Environment accepted the report from Val Gibbons, entitled *Managing the Environment: A Review of Best Practices*, it signalled a fundamental shift in the way our province will go about protecting the environment. Our course of action has never been clearer. We have a new mission to make the environment a broad responsibility across all ministries and beyond, to involve community groups, businesses, academics and the public, all within a climate of continuous improvement.

This ambitious new course of action is a broad, integrated series of regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives from policy development right through to enforcement. We have a new cabinet environment policy committee and a new associate deputy minister, the only such position in government charged with implementing our framework. In short, our government will refocus the environment ministry to enable it to realize a bold, new 21st-century vision of environmental health and safety.

Also, in the coming year we will concentrate on policies and actions that protect and preserve the quality and safety of our most basic necessities: our air, water and land. We will introduce amendments to strengthen and modernize Ontario's environmental protection laws.

We will build on the success to date of initiatives like Operation Clean Water. Our government will take decisive steps to protect the province's water supply, including implementation of a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary strategy to protect Ontario's groundwater. With local conservation authorities, municipalities and other partners, the government will work to ensure the cleanest and safest drinking water. At the same time, we will continue to enforce Operation Clean Water with regular and frequent sampling, stringent treatment requirements, more transparency and public access to information.

Furthermore, we must do more to protect the Great Lakes. Collectively, they are the greatest freshwater source on earth, and we have a responsibility for their preservation. To respond to emergencies and monitor the quality of the Great Lakes, our government will acquire a new high-tech monitoring vessel.

Preserving and improving air quality is one of our most difficult challenges because of the diverse sources of air pollution and the broad range of effects it has on our environment and our health. In many parts of the province, more than 50% of our air pollution comes across the border from the United States. But even as we try to encourage border states to reduce their emissions, we are pursuing and must pursue better standards here at home.

Our government has already made great strides in addressing pollution from the electricity sector, including introducing stringent new emission caps on fossil fuel plants. In the transportation sector, we have expanded our highly successful Drive Clean program as it enters its second phase.

To protect Ontario's air quality and meet the province's existing commitments to reduce emissions, the government will propose an Ontario air quality and climate change strategy. The strategy will take aim at a wider range of air pollution sources. Ontario is determined to continue setting the pace as a North American leader in air quality.

1400

Last year we introduced our first phase of mandatory monitoring and reporting of emissions of 28 substances from the electricity generators. Starting this week, in order to further encourage emission reductions in Ontario, we are expanding this requirement to other large industries. In addition, the total list of pollutants with a reporting requirement has increased to 358, including the full suite of greenhouse gases. This makes it one of the most comprehensive plans in the world.

Mandatory monitoring and reporting will help us set future caps on emissions, track progress in our fight against smog, acid rain and climate change, and establish a foundation for future air quality protection measures. In response to the *Managing the Environment* report, the government will establish a comprehensive environmental monitoring and reporting strategy.

Along with mandatory monitoring and reporting, we must have the capacity to conduct inspections. Our government will improve environmental protection by enhancing the environmental SWAT team approach and related technological innovations to include inspections and enforcement activities, and the SWAT team will be permanent.

To help protect air quality and energy conservation in the future, we need to look more closely at the role of new technologies. We will propose that a legislative committee investigate environmentally friendly, sustainable alternatives to our existing fuel sources and report back within 12 months. This committee would conduct an objective, forward-thinking review of options to

produce positive solutions, and in the near future we will be seeking out members who are eager to participate. The recommendations of the *Managing the Environment* report that addressed knowledge management and emerging issues will help guide this research.

These initiatives, guided by a clear, long-term strategy for protection and sustainability, and supported by a wide range of stakeholders both within and outside of government, give Ontario the best environmental strategy in the history of this province.

Building on the *Managing the Environment* report, we will stay true to the direction laid out in the throne speech and work to ensure that future generations inherit a clean and healthy province. We invite all Ontario citizens, community representatives, experts and concerned citizens to contribute to the dialogue as our vision takes shape, and to work with us in making this vision a reality.

**Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** My colleague the Minister of the Environment has just reaffirmed this government's commitment to protect our drinking water and our groundwater.

I have lived and worked all my life in rural Ontario, and I understand that the agri-food industry is a crucial component in the well-being of our rural communities and, indeed, the entire province. It boosts our economy in excess of \$25 billion each year. It supplies an abundance of safe, high-quality products, and the competitiveness of this industry must continue to be a high priority.

The prosperity of the industry relies on the goodwill of all rural residents and the careful stewardship of our precious natural resources. This is not to say that Ontario's farmers have been poor stewards of our resources; quite the contrary. Ontario's farmers are world leaders when it comes to environmental stewardship. They have voluntarily adopted best-management practices and implemented environmental farm plans to minimize the effects of agriculture on our natural resources. But they know, as well as we do, that more needs to be done.

In the winter of 2000, a province-wide consultation showed that farmers, rural residents and municipalities all believe that to manage land-applied nutrients consistently, roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined. To that end, the government will introduce a comprehensive nutrient management strategy that will provide Ontario's agricultural industry with clear environmental protection guidelines. This will ensure that our agricultural sector has accurate information on which to base its management decisions. It will help grow our businesses and our communities in a responsible manner. This will also ensure that Ontario's agricultural sector maintains its leadership role in environmental stewardship.

It is the next step on the path of continuous improvement. It is a path that is best travelled in partnership. Working with the ministries of the environment, health, municipal affairs and housing, natural resources, all of our stakeholders, we will be able to make those tough decisions required to stay the course. I put the highest

priority on encouraging a strong, environmentally responsible agricultural sector, and I'm proud that with our partners we're taking another major step in that direction.

## LIVING LEGACY

### **Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):**

I'm proud to be making a statement on what our government is doing to help ensure that future generations inherit a clean and healthy province. As a government we are preserving Ontario's rugged beauty and protecting its rich natural resources.

This spring marks the second anniversary of Ontario's Living Legacy. It's a major milestone in natural heritage protection in the province. Living Legacy initially was a land use strategy for an area covering about half of the province, but that has since been expanded to a province-wide program. It means, among other things, 378 new parks and protected areas, totalling almost 6 million acres. It's the largest single expansion of parks anywhere. Ontario's Living Legacy includes nine signature sites, such as the Great Lakes Heritage Coast, Kawartha Highlands and the Nipigon Basin, areas with exceptional natural heritage features that merit special protection and special promotion.

Last November, the Premier announced more than \$100 million to make Living Legacy the most comprehensive natural heritage program in provincial history, with funding going to species at risk, youth employment, acquisition of ecologically sensitive lands and more protection enhancement for fish and wildlife in their habitats.

On April 27 of this year, we moved to protect three more species at risk, bringing to 29 the number regulated under the Endangered Species Act. We've launched six employment programs for Ontario's young people, creating more than 2,300 jobs to help deliver Ontario's Living Legacy. We recently announced the protection of 11 natural areas in southern Ontario through the natural areas protection program, a key component of Living Legacy.

As we approach our peak camping, fishing and hunting seasons, it is worth noting that fish and wildlife are a very important part of Living Legacy. As Minister of Natural Resources, I know how important these activities are, not only to our own residents but also to visitors to our province.

Ontario is blessed with a tremendous variety and abundance of fish and wildlife. Careful regulation ensures that hunting and fishing are carried out in a sound and sustainable way. Hunters and anglers are actively involved in work to protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat in partnership with my ministry. That's why the government will introduce a Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act to recognize the important role hunting and fishing play in many Ontario communities.

Ontario's Living Legacy is also about long-term security for resource-based industries and fostering a business climate that attracts investment and encourages



growth. That is being achieved through the key component of Living Legacy, the Ontario Forest Accord. The accord is a precedent-setting approach by the government, the forest industry and the environmental community to work together in establishing new protected areas while considering the needs of the forest industry for a sustainable wood supply. The Ontario Forest Accord advisory board, with equal representation from the industry, the Partnership for Public Lands and the Ministry of Natural Resources, was set up to implement this accord. The board's recent interim report highlighted agreement on a mechanism for sharing the forest resource into the future. The board expressed confidence that there will be room for growth in new parkland, room for growth in wood supply for the industry and room for growth for jobs for Ontarians.

The resource stewardship agreements between the resourced-based tourism industry and the forest industry will also help the economy by providing greater certainty about available land use. This in turn means more long-term investment.

1410

Ontario's forest industry leads the world in sustainable forest management practices. On March 23 we began a bilateral negotiation process that is intended to lead to formal recognition from the international Forest Stewardship Council that Ontario's forest management practices, regulations and other practices meet world environmental and social standards. Ontario is positioned to be the largest jurisdiction in the world to receive this international green stamp of approval.

I think it's clear our province is committed to sound, sustainable management of our natural resources, and the world is taking note. The government's goal is for Ontario to be recognized as a world leader in sustainable forest management and protection practices and a world leader in the protection of public lands, opening new markets for our forest industry and protecting our natural environment for future generations.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** To describe what we heard as hollow platitudes would be to compliment it, because what we have heard are several re-announcements by ministers without any kind of specific detail, minor movements in minor directions, and no overall commitment on the part of the government of Ontario to improve the environment.

We have a new minister with high expectations, but what she must recognize is that there's virtually no support within that cabinet or that caucus for the kind of aggressive environmental initiatives that are needed. All the jargon and puffery that we hear in the Legislature today cannot disguise the fact that the Harris government cut this ministry's budget by 45%, almost one half, fired one third of the staff out the door, and took away the clout of this ministry.

If it is going to play a prominent role within this government, a paramount role in controlling pollution and in promoting the environment, then it must have the necessary staff resources, funding and clout within government. I would suspect, looking at the colleagues the minister has and the fact that we have a Red Tape Commission with so much power, that when push comes to shove, the environment will get pushed to the bottom of the pile.

When I talk about staffing, for instance, you would expect the ministry would be hiring people because of the embarrassment of Walkerton. We went through the Job Mart and Topical newspapers, which talk about who the government is going to hire. Our hiring numbers since Walkerton do not indicate any government plans for what I would call a long-term commitment to environmental protection. In the critical areas of enforcement and investigation and scientists, junior environment officers, senior environment officers and science and technical, 67% of the hires are temporary positions. I guess this is consistent with the Premier's comment, "I don't think it makes sense to staff up for that bulge on a permanent basis."

MOE has hired only eight permanent junior officers since June 2000, none since November 2000. Some 72% of the senior officers hired are temporary positions. Much like the announcement of the pathetically understaffed SWAT team, these temporary positions simply put another piece in the Tory PR exercise which can be easily chopped when the spotlight is off Walkerton and the environment. The real test will be whether the funding of this ministry is restored and whether we have permanent positions in this ministry.

I wish the minister well. I will support her in that endeavour. But what has been announced today is a clear indication that this government still does not see the environment as a priority.

## LIVING LEGACY

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** This is an initiative that's been hanging around this Legislature for over a year and a half, and this statement today clearly shows that the Harris government is definitely not up to the job of dealing with agricultural operations in this province. Where is the definition of the strategy in this?

Instead of going forward and looking ahead with a vision for agriculture in the 21st century, this government is going backwards. At least the former minister, Mr Hardeman, had the guts and the courage to talk about legislation and regulation. This announcement today doesn't even equal the previous commitments this government made. You've abandoned this industry. You've not provided any clarity to farmers, to municipalities, or more importantly, to the rural residents of this province.

The farmers in this province right now, because of the inaction of this government, are being dragged into court. Justice Kennedy has recently ruled in West Perth that the province must take action. This statement today demon-

strates that the province is not showing a commitment and is not taking action. It is also shown in Justice Kennedy's ruling that municipalities cannot be randomly allowed to impose livestock cap sizes—again no mention in this.

The minister talks a great deal about the number two industry in this province. Unfortunately this government is stifling and stalling investment in this industry. You talk about, "We've got individuals who are prepared to invest and expand. We've got individuals who are prepared to do things," but they have no rules. You're implementing more red tape. You talk about partnerships, but what we need is leadership and this government is not showing leadership in dealing with the agricultural community in this province.

It's just another doublespeak for downloading. You're going to download this to the municipal governments when it should be a provincial responsibility with provincial enforcement and province-wide regulations.

As glaringly as agriculture was not mentioned in the throne speech, even more glaringly today there is no mention of capital support for improvements that are going to have to be made as a result of new legislation.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** It's interesting to hear the Minister of Natural Resources talk about the fact that he believes there's going to be an ever-increasing supply of wood in northern Ontario. The minister needs to get out of his office in Toronto, get into the boreal forest in northern Ontario and go and visit the mills that are all now talking about the wood supply shortage, the wood supply gap that's going to happen. Anybody who has a wood supply map knows that within the next five years a number of mills in northern Ontario are going to face a shortage of wood, and within the next 10 years it's going to hit virtually every mill and it's going to last for the next 25 years.

When I asked some of the minister's officials at public accounts what their strategy was to deal with this, they admitted they didn't have a strategy. In fact, the only thing this government can point to is 10,000-hectare clear-cuts. That is the government strategy and they call it environmentally sustainable. People need to know what a 10,000-hectare clear-cut means. It means no habitat for moose, no habitat for deer, no habitat for birds or bears or any of the other fur-bearing animals. It means destroying the natural habitat.

When I asked if this government was even consulting with First Nations, because the now available wood supply is all in First Nations territory, the response was, "We're waiting for the First Nations to come to us."

There are over 60 mills and 30,000 jobs that now face, within the next five years, a wood supply shortage, and over the next 25 years will certainly face a wood supply shortage. This government's answer? It's 10,000-hectare clear-cuts. That's their answer: cut everything in sight. Then they talk about environmental sustainability.

I want to refer to the Minister of Agriculture, because what we've seen from this government is three rounds of consultation now. A year and a half ago, in the winter of 2000, they went out and consulted on the issue of nutrient

management in the farm areas of Ontario. Then they brought back a report that they wouldn't show to anyone. Then the tragedy at Walkerton happened. Seven people died and over 2,000 people became seriously ill. What was the government's response? They said they were going to go out and consult some more. Then they came back and said, "We think this should be turned over to municipalities." Imagine: municipalities are going to do the enforcement. The next thing we'll hear is that municipalities are going to have to enforce against the chemical companies and the pulp and paper companies and the mining companies—no strategy whatsoever.

What do we hear now? Now they're going to go out and consult for the third time. There's no strategy here. This is just a strategy or a direction for delay while the problem becomes more and more serious out there.

1420

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** The most telling words in the statement from the Minister of the Environment today are that they will stay true to the direction laid out in the throne speech, because the throne speech was silent on the environment. In fact, a confidential Q&A guide to Tory members said, "Today's throne speech didn't contain a single announcement about steps your government will take to protect the environment. Isn't this a terrible oversight?"

Minister, sadly, it wasn't a terrible oversight. You said yourself the other day that this was astounding, that for the first time, "The Premier and my cabinet colleagues are committed to the environment." But your statement today proves you wrong.

It is well known by now that there are only two greens that Mike Harris understands: the green of the golf course and the green of the money he takes out of the taxpayers' pockets and puts into the rich people's pockets. Those are the two greens he understands: the golf course and the money he takes out of taxpayers' money and puts into his buddies' pockets.

Minister, let me tell you something: what we heard today was more of the same stuff over and over again. We were expecting an announcement that there would be money put back in the ministry and the staff put back in.

You talk about the Gibbons report. It's nice that you finally discovered such a thing as a horizontal model. It's been around for over 30 years. In fact, it's been discussed for over 30 years. The measures that our government took, like the green planning act and others, you've wiped out. So don't use that as an excuse not to put the resources back in the environment. That's what we wanted to hear today.

PAT CAREY

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise today to seek unanimous consent for a minute's silence to honour the Toronto Fire Services captain, Pat Carey.



**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** Captain Carey died while fighting an apartment fire this past Monday night.

**The Speaker:** Sorry to interrupt the minister. Did we want to do the moment's silence and then some speeches on it, or would you like to do it first?

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** Why don't I do that?

**The Speaker:** OK.

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** Captain Carey died while fighting an apartment fire this past Monday night. Captain Carey was a 29-year veteran of the Toronto Fire Services and, sadly, was due to retire in just a few months' time.

He leaves behind his wife and three children, and our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with them and all who knew Captain Carey.

We honour Captain Carey and all the brave firefighters in Ontario who on a daily basis risk their lives so that the rest of us are safe.

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** I'd like to echo those sentiments that were expressed by the minister. I would also like to add that firefighters on a regular basis put their lives on the line. To know that doing your job means you may have to lose your life speaks to the professionalism and dedication to the job that's done by firefighters on a regular basis.

We also have to acknowledge that their families know that when mom or dad goes to work, they might not come back. We must recognize that the families of our firefighters go through the pain on a daily basis.

To the captain, to their families, to all firefighters, on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus, we offer our prayers and our hope that this never happens again.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** There's always something incredibly shocking to us mere lay people when firefighters die in the course of performing their duties. We are shocked and we're saddened and we're oftentimes overwhelmed, as we are in the instance of Captain Carey. But for firefighters, for those women and men who confront the realities of those dangers on a daily basis, it's a moment of great sadness but it's hardly a moment of the same shock that we respond with, because these women and men surrender, park, their personal safety as they respond to emergency calls that require fire suppression, as they respond to emergency calls in industrial areas and in industrial buildings and in high-rise apartment buildings, where the complexities of firefighting have become all that much more intense, demanding and dangerous.

The New Democrats here certainly join with our colleagues in the other two parties in paying tribute to Captain Carey, and in doing that we pay tribute to firefighters, women and men across this province—big city, small town alike—who have given their lives and who, as I say, set aside their personal safety on a daily basis as they act on behalf of the welfare and safety of their communities. God bless them.

**The Speaker:** Would all the members and our friends in the gallery please rise for a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker:** I thank all members. Will you please take your seats.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** We have a deferred vote on Mr Hampton's amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1426 to 1431.*

**The Speaker:** Would the members kindly take their seats, please.

Mr Hampton has moved an amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Marchese, Rosario
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martel, Shelley
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	Martin, Tony
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	McGuinty, Dalton
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	McLeod, Lyn
Caplan, David	Gravelle, Michael	Parsons, Ernie
Christopherson, David	Hampton, Howard	Patten, Richard
Churley, Marilyn	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Conway, Sean G.	Lankin, Frances	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the clerk

#### Nays

Amott, Ted	Harris, Michael D.	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	Mazzilli, Frank	Tumbull, David
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Guzzo, Garry J.	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 35; the nays are 54.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

Mr Miller moved, seconded by Mr Arnott, that the humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

"To the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has addressed to us.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1435 to 1440.*

**The Speaker:** Would the members kindly take their seats, please.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted  
Baird, John R.  
Barrett, Toby  
Beaubien, Marcel  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Brad  
Clement, Tony  
Coburn, Brian  
Cunningham, Dianne  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Ecker, Janet  
Elliott, Brenda  
Flaherty, Jim  
Galt, Doug  
Gilchrist, Steve  
Gill, Raminder  
Guzzo, Garry J.  
Hardeman, Ernie

Harris, Michael D.  
Hastings, John  
Hodgson, Chris  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Cameron  
Johns, Helen  
Johnson, Bert  
Kells, Morley  
Klees, Frank  
Marland, Margaret  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Maves, Bart  
Mazzilli, Frank  
Miller, Norm  
Molinari, Tina R.  
Munro, Julia  
Murdoch, Bill  
Mushinski, Marilyn

Newman, Dan  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Sampson, Rob  
Snobelen, John  
Spina, Joseph  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Stewart, R. Gary  
Stockwell, Chris  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Tsubouchi, David H.  
Tumbull, David  
Wettlaufer, Wayne  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wood, Bob  
Young, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bisson, Gilles  
Bountrogianni, Marie  
Bradley, James J.  
Caplan, David  
Christopherson, David  
Churley, Marilyn  
Cleary, John C.  
Colle, Mike  
Conway, Sean G.  
Crozier, Bruce

Curling, Alvin  
Di Cocco, Caroline  
Dombrowsky, Leona  
Duncan, Dwight  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hampton, Howard  
Hoy, Pat  
Komos, Peter  
Kwinter, Monte  
Lankin, Frances  
Levac, David

Marchese, Rosario  
Martel, Shelley  
Martin, Tony  
McGuinty, Dalton  
McLeod, Lyn  
Parsons, Ernie  
Patten, Richard  
Peters, Steve  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Smitherman, George

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. In the throne speech you promised Ontario's working families that, "The government will act to ensure that all students in Ontario have the benefit of co-instructional activities."

That was received in many quarters by many families as good news. Many of our young people have been affected by the loss of their sports and clubs for up to 900 days. In fact, over 200,000 families have now been affected by the loss of extracurricular activities. Premier, on behalf of Ontario's working families, I want to know what specifically you are planning to do and when specifically you are planning to do it.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I'll refer this to the Minister of Education.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** The honourable member knows, because I certainly have stated my personal belief and this government's belief, that extracurricular activities, co-instructional activities for students, are incredibly important. They open up opportunities for students. Teachers' relationships with students can be improved because of extracurricular activities.

We took a number of steps last year to try to reach compromises that would have resolved the issue. They did not resolve the issue. In some communities the labour disputes, when they were settled, resolved the issue, in other communities it did not. So we have the task force report. There are some excellent recommendations in that report. We are studying that now to see how we can move forward with those recommendations, because students deserve extracurricular activities and we're prepared to take steps to make sure they have them.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, I don't want you to talk to me about communities resolving this issue. You have to take personal responsibility for resolving this issue. I'm not sure you understand how serious this matter is. We're talking about over 500,000 children who have been deprived of their clubs and sports. We're talking about over 200,000 families. We're talking about some children who have been affected by this for over 900 days. It is your responsibility to fix this mess, which you have created.

I put forward a peace plan. We took a long time to develop that. We tried to compromise between your government and our teachers, and by so doing to put our students first. You cast that aside and said you would have nothing to do with it. Your own task force came forward with some recommendations. You cast those aside and said you would have nothing to do with them.

I ask you once again, Madam Minister—this has gone on long enough—what are you going to do on behalf of

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 54; the nays are 35.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.



our students and our families to get back their extra-curricular activities?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I know the honourable member has his question written, and therefore he doesn't listen to the answer. No one has tossed aside the task force report, and to continue to put that out is being mischievous, to be very charitable.

Second, let's also be very clear: your so-called solution, the solution you are putting forward, is to increase the student workload in order to decrease the teacher workload. So students already have extra time in class, their school year has already been extended, they're doing extra work with the new curriculum, extra homework, standardized testing, grade 10 literacy, and the honourable member says, "Let's solve the problem by making students work harder so teachers can work less hard." That is not a solution.

I'm very pleased to hear that the honourable member supports the task force recommendations. Perhaps he would also like to specifically support the two that tell the union to stop penalizing members for doing extra-curricular activities.

**Mr McGuinty:** In case you missed this, with respect to our peace plan that we put forward to you over four months ago, that is overwhelmingly endorsed by Ontario's students—just so you know. They want their school activities back. They want their sports back. They want their clubs back. We are moving very close to a point where someone can go through an Ontario high school and never have participated in or seen a football game, never have participated in or seen a school play, never have participated in the work that goes into preparing a year book. That is happening on the watch of the Mike Harris government.

You've had two options placed before you. You said one more time in the throne speech that you're going to fix this. I'm asking, on behalf of Ontario's 200,000 families who have been affected by this mess, when are you going to fix it?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Of course students want their extra-curricular activities back, and I agree with the honourable member that when a student goes to a teacher and asks that teacher to write a letter of reference for a scholarship and that particular teacher says, "No, it's an extra-curricular activity, don't you know?" or when that student goes to that teacher and says, "Help us with the Remembrance Day ceremony," and that teacher says, "No, because the union is preventing me from doing that"—those are the stories that families and students and teachers are telling this government. That's why we made compromises, that's why we invested more money, that's why we have a task force report that did an excellent job of bringing forward recommendations.

We're doing the work on that and, I repeat, the students did not endorse your so-called solution. They did not agree that the solution to this was to let their workload increase so that the teachers' workload would decrease. That is not the solution.

## TUITION FEES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Working families want to know that any young person in Ontario with good marks and hard work can become a doctor. We don't believe that how wealthy your family is should in any way dictate whether you get into medical school. Tuition fees for medical school in Ontario under your government's watch have skyrocketed, with your approval, from \$5,000 to \$14,000 every year. Young people from working families have been hit especially hard by your tuition hikes. The average yearly family income of Western's medical students has gone from \$80,000 to \$140,000 in just four years.

1450

Behind me today, Premier, are a number of medical school students from medical schools across the province who are very concerned about this development on your watch. My question to you is, why are you shutting young people from working families out of medical school?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate the question. I think it's important to put a few things in context in one of certainly the lowest medical tuitions for quality schools in North America, which we have here in Ontario, including the University of Western Ontario.

The first thing is that when we significantly increased funding and opportunities and matching scholarships and bursaries and tuition increases, we insisted that universities must apply a third of that to bursaries. That means that all medical students who need help paying for tuition and ancillary fees above \$4,500 must get it from the universities. Second, I can tell you that last year alone there were 572 medical students in Ontario, up from 532 in previous years. Applications are up this year: 3,854 students were competing for those 572 spaces. I might add as well that I am not aware of one student accepted for medical—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The Premier's time is up.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you are changing the rules in the middle of the game. You are making it so that only young people from wealthy families can go to medical school. We think that is wrong. We think you are depriving Ontario from choosing among the very best, right across the socio-economic spectrum. You're saying that the only young people who can get into medical school, according to your rules, will have to come from wealthy families.

The average family income in Ontario, Premier, and you may have lost sight of this, is less than \$60,000. The percentage of students who come from family income of less than \$60,000 has now been cut by more than one-half on your watch. It used to be that 36% of medical students came from struggling working families. Now it's only 15%. I ask you again, Premier, why are you shutting young people from our struggling working families out of medical school?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me elaborate a little further. The government currently subsidizes, over and above tuition, \$22,000 a year for the universities to run our medical programs. In addition to that, should there be a student whose parents can contribute nothing and the student can contribute nothing and there's no time to work—absolutely nothing—we pay the \$22,000 for that spot; in addition, \$10,725 in OSAP loan assistance, of which only \$7,000 would be repayable; in addition, one third of those tuition increases are to be provided in bursaries. So it is possible that at the end of four years, a medical student will graduate owing \$28,000. We think that's easily repayable, with a guaranteed OHIP billing number in the province of Ontario, within the first few months of work.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, if you have a study that contradicts what I have been saying, then please table it here and now. The only reliable information we have is the following: young people from working families have been especially hard hit by your policies. The average yearly family income for our medical students has gone from \$80,000 to \$140,000. Those are the facts, Premier.

You may feel, given your view of the world, that this is somehow unimportant and not particularly relevant. Well, I can tell you that we on this side of the House, who have the interest of working families in our hearts, think this is wrong. We think it's wrong for those families. We think it's wrong for our province. We think our province is entitled to choose from among the very best, the very brightest, those who are working the hardest and those who are getting the best marks, not simply those who come from the richest families.

I'm asking you, Premier, what are you going to do now in the face of this information and this data? What are you going to do to ensure that young people from our working families aren't shut out of medical schools?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me say a couple of things. Unlike the Liberals and the NDP, we've insisted that one third of any tuition increases be used for bursaries in addition to the Ontario student loan program. I would say that there are, in fact, some who borrow and are responsible for up to \$7,000 a year in student loans and now, after three or four years, are graduating, for example, in early childhood education, with a potential of making \$25,000 or \$30,000 a year.

We do have a very real concern. But when you talk about students who are massively subsidized by the taxpayer in our medical schools, with a guaranteed income upon graduation five, 10 or 15 times that of childcare workers or some other lower-income workers, then I question your priorities.

Finally, I issue this challenge: bring me one student accepted into a medical school here in Ontario who has refused to go with all of the assistance we've provided. I would like to meet that person and talk with him.

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, we saw you

deliver George Bush's energy strategy. You admitted that you and the Liberal Prime Minister have both been working on the dirty deal to sell off our electricity system, and you both seem to think that building more nuclear plants in Ontario is a good idea. Do you and the Prime Minister really believe that the people of Ontario want to see more nuclear plants in their back yards just to serve the American thirst for electricity?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** When you talk about the whole North American demand for growth and increased energy, you can't put your head in the sand. You have to look at what are the options and the possibilities. Do you want 10 new coal plants in Michigan or Ohio blowing into Ontario, or would you like one or two nuclear plants, the number one green energy alternative in the world today?

**Mr Hampton:** I think the strategy is becoming clear. While you're telling us how much you endorse Mr Bush's strategy, the Liberal Prime Minister is ramming legislation through the House of Commons that will allow the burial of nuclear waste, even though environmentalists say that the system they've chosen is not safe.

Premier, I have to ask you this: will you tell the people where in Ontario the nuclear waste that will be generated by new nuclear stations will be buried? Will you tell the people of Ontario that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I haven't even said there would be new nuclear stations. But a bigger question is, where are we going to put the waste from the existing nuclear stations that we have today? Clearly, we have an obligation, when we are obviously the leading country in the world in heavy water reactors, to deal with spent fuel. This is something the federal government is charged with and is responsible for and it is something that we have been pressing them to make a decision on. It's not a matter of new nuclear reactors. It's a matter of the existing nuclear reactors that we have to find long-term, safe, sustainable disposal for.

I think it's important when you consider that—I know there are some environmentalists that are opposed to every form of energy, I suppose, including some that would say a windmill heats up the air and that contributes to global warming. But I have to tell you that of all the practical, cost-effective solutions, nuclear energy is appearing more and more to be the green energy of choice.

**Mr Hampton:** The problem I have with all of this is I don't remember you in the last election telling the people of Ontario that your plan was to sell off our electricity system. I don't remember you telling the people of Ontario that your plan and Jean Chrétien's plan was to build more nuclear plants to feed electricity into the United States. I don't remember you telling people in Ontario that you had a proposal to bury more nuclear waste in our province. Premier, tell us: where and when did you get the mandate to sell off our electricity system, build more nuclear plants and bury more nuclear waste?

**Hon Mr Harris:** As I recall, it was in 1998 when we had an all-party committee. We travelled the province.



We debated the Energy Competition Act and it was passed in 1998, well before the 1999 election. It may have been brought up in the election. I don't recall you ever bringing it up, including in the debate we had. It may have been brought up, and we would have pointed to the legislation that passed and the desire among the Ontario government to proceed away from this government monopoly that had been inefficient, that had led to debt I think far in excess of where it should be in Ontario, and to move to competition and away from the monopoly. I think the voters of Ontario were well aware in 1999 of that legislation and of the intention of the government.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** New question?

**Mr Hampton:** The Premier might want to remember that it was the nuclear plants built by a former Conservative government that saddled Ontario with the debt, and your strategy is going to take us there again.

1500

## PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I have a question to the Premier. Three months ago, we warned that this government had a plan to privatize water. Now we find out that the Premier has admitted that much. Privatizing our water, selling it off to corporations, makes no more sense that selling off our electricity system, especially when the people of Ontario say no, especially when the Walkerton inquiry hasn't even reported yet. Premier, will you show some respect for the Walkerton inquiry? Will you show some respect for the people of Ontario and say to people very clearly that you don't intend to privatize our sewer and water systems?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think you're well aware that the private sector is involved in some areas of our sewer and water system today, and was under your administration as well.

Certainly I respect the people of Walkerton, which was a fully public system, I might point out. We are awaiting the recommendations from Walkerton to look at what we need to do in the future to ensure that public systems like Walkerton, or private systems that exist in the province today, that all systems, regardless of who owns or operates them—municipalities or the province or OCWA or the private sector—meet tough standards so that we can have security and guaranteed safe drinking water in Ontario. That's our commitment.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Final supplementary?

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Premier, I want to remind you of the information we have from what happened in Britain when they privatized the system. It shouldn't even be on the table. Costs went up for poor people. Some poor people had their water turned off. More people got sick. There were droughts like they had never seen before.

I want to say to you, Premier, that what you have done since you've come to government is taken away the measures the previous NDP government brought in to deal with some historic problems in the system. We created the Ontario Clean Water Agency and put 1,000 workers there to run it. You fired 1,000 workers. You privatized all the water-testing labs. You got rid of the programs to help farmers deal with agricultural runoff. I heard you say on the radio the other day that the private sector could do it better.

I am asking you again: will you tell us today that you will build up the Ministry of the Environment again, instead of tearing it down, so that the workers can protect, through the public system, the drinking water of Ontarians?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Certainly we on this side of the House and the minister very much share the concern of ensuring that we never have another Walkerton, regardless of who runs water in Ontario. We are following the inquiry and continue to express our sympathy to the families and the people of Walkerton. I appreciate the member's selective memory on her government's record and I appreciate the advice.

## AIR QUALITY

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a question to the Premier. The Ontario Medical Association indicated that 1,900 premature deaths a year occur because of air quality problems in the province of Ontario and that it costs \$1 billion in terms of lost time at work and the cost to the medical system. With a good deal of fanfare, just as we had the fanfare today, your previous Minister of the Environment announced that the people of Ontario would be notified when the air quality index went over 50, in other words, when there was poor air quality. Yesterday in Kitchener it was 51; in Niagara, 51; in North Bay, 54; in Parry Sound, 61; in York region, 55; and in Algonquin park it was 62—all poor air quality.

Can you explain to the people of Ontario why, after the announcement by your previous minister that they would be notified and provided with a smog alert, no such smog alert was given in Ontario?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I'm sure the minister can.

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** Unfortunately, despite the fact that discussions were held with Environment Canada and with the meteorologist in the state of Michigan, all the indications were that air quality was to be generally in the moderate range. As a result, this was unexpected and no alert was issued.

However, I can tell you that our forecasting data have allowed the ministry to predict poor air quality for tomorrow and we will be issuing a smog alert for tomorrow.

**Mr Bradley:** You see, Madam Minister, we get these announcements with a lot of fanfare about what you're going to do, and then, when it comes to the action, when it comes to following through, we don't get the action.

In the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, there is an air quality report which has been sitting on the shelf somewhere and, to my knowledge, has not been released. They refused to release it during the election campaign in Parry Sound-Muskoka. Your ministry kept it behind closed doors. We see that the air quality index in Parry Sound is 61, one of the highest there is.

I ask the minister, in light of the problems experienced in Ontario, when are you going to require industries in this province—industrial sources—and your coal-fired plants to take meaningful and aggressive action to ratchet down the amount of pollution going out in Ontario and adversely impacting children and seniors and others in this province?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** If you take a look at the announcement we've made today regarding mandatory monitoring, there are 358 that are going to be monitored, that are going to be reported. I guess we are one of the first governments in the world to include an entire suite of greenhouse gases. I also remind the member opposite that in May 2000 our government actually enhanced the smog alert and air index quality program.

Again, I would remind you, based on the best advice we got in consultation with both Environment Canada and the state of Michigan—I've indicated to you what has happened, but I've also indicated what's going to happen tomorrow, so you're aware of the fact that there's going to be a smog alert.

### CONESTOGO DAM

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. It concerns a very serious issue, a top priority for my riding of Waterloo-Wellington, and that is the need to fix the Conestogo dam. The Conestogo dam controls water flow for the Conestogo and Grand Rivers, which affect the water supply of much of Waterloo region and the city of Brantford. The gates on this dam are broken, and estimates place the repair costs at between \$1.2 million and \$1.5 million. If the gates aren't fixed, in a worst-case scenario the dam could fail or collapse in the springtime, resulting in a catastrophic flash flood in which lives most likely would be lost. In the summertime, water levels could sink below normally controlled levels, putting our drinking water downstream at risk.

I want to thank the minister for meeting with representatives of the Grand River Conservation Authority and with the president of the SuperBuild Corp, David Lindsay. In these meetings, we were informed that currently there is no direct funding mechanism that would enable the province to be a major partner in repairing the dam, as should be the case. I would like to ask the minister, what can he tell the House regarding the scope of this problem, as it may be experienced by conservation authorities across the province?

1510

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):** I want to thank the member for Waterloo-Wellington for the question today because I know this is a concern for

himself and for a good number of his constituents, and he has taken a very active role in making sure that I've been aware of this, my ministry has been aware of it and in fact going to the meetings that he's just alluded to.

As always, and as noted in the question, safety has to be the first consideration in any of these capital projects, in any of these major dams across the province. I'm pleased to note that in the Brantford Expositor in March of this year there was a story that read, "Contrary to some reports, a Grand River Conservation Authority spokesman insists the aging Conestogo dam is not in immediate danger of collapse and the organization is gaining wide support in its bid to help pay for the upgrades."

I was relieved to hear from the story, from the conservation authority and from my ministry that there isn't a real urgent safety issue for the public in this case.

Because safety is our first consideration, the Ministry of Natural Resources has begun developing and is well on the way to developing, in partnership with the conservation authorities and others, dam safety guidelines for the first time in the province of Ontario which will allow us to make sure these structures are safe.

**Mr Arnott:** I'm afraid I didn't see the article to which the minister referred, but I look forward to looking at it when I can.

I want to thank the minister for his answer and for his continuing interest in this issue. Clearly this issue should be no more complex than providing the mechanism for conservation authorities to come forward and request support from the provincial government for infrastructure repair that is in the interests of protecting public safety, as the minister indicated.

I will ask the minister, then, does he support my recommendation that conservation authorities be provided with this channel to obtain funding through a class of applications that would be accepted from conservation authorities, and will he assist the Grand River Conservation Authority to fix the Conestogo dam?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I'm pleased to be able to report to the member that in February, in fact, there was a report that the Grand River Conservation Authority has been very responsible in this matter. I must say, in the relationship with the municipalities that are served, and there are many of those, included in their \$17.3-million budget for this year was \$600,000 for repairs on the dam this year and \$600,000 for repairs next year, which in fact is what they estimate to be the cost of these repairs. I'd also note that \$1.5 million of the funding for the conservation authority comes from the province.

I'm also told and I'm pleased to tell the member today that the Grand River Conservation Authority funding application has been received by SuperBuild and will be reviewed by them. I'm very pleased with the approach that the Grand River Conservation Authority and the member have taken to this critical problem.

### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier and it has to do with the



shooting death at Ipperwash Provincial Park. I want to follow up on an answer that you gave to us very recently here in the Legislature, where you revealed something that, in our opinion, was never known before publicly. You said that on September 6, the day of the shooting, hours before the confrontation, you met with the OPP commissioner to discuss the situation in the park. That's what you said in the Legislature. That was a new revelation to us.

The question for you, Premier, is, why did you wait five years to reveal the fact that you had this meeting? Why did you keep that fact away from the public for so long?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think I may have indicated that we did meet with the OPP commissioner. I'm told we did not meet with the OPP commissioner, and I did not.

**Mr Phillips:** So you're indicating you did not meet with the OPP commissioner the day of the shooting. I'm advised that your own lawyer in recent court proceedings initially strongly denied to the court that you had held this meeting with the head of the OPP hours before the police moved to confront the First Nations. I'm informed that later she was forced to tell the court that she had to change her story, and that in fact you had met with the OPP commissioner. Can you tell us which of these two versions of the truth is reality?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I'd be pleased to check for you, but my recollection is I was not here the day of the actual shooting and any meeting—I certainly would not have met with the OPP commissioner, to the best of my knowledge, at that time. I'm happy to check that and give you the information.

## ROAD SAFETY

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Minister of Transportation. This afternoon I reintroduced my private member's bill to ban riding in the back of pickup trucks. It's called the outside riders act. This act was previously introduced and died on the order paper.

As you know, riding in the back of a truck is extremely dangerous. If the driver of the vehicle is forced to make a sudden stop or accidentally drives off the road, passengers situated in the back can easily be thrown from the vehicle, causing serious injuries and even death. Therefore, I want to ensure that my bill is passed so that the dangerous activity of riding in the back of a truck is banned for good.

Many provinces have already taken this step, and recently the province of Alberta made riding in the back of pickup trucks illegal. I think it's time we did so as well. It's way overdue.

Minister, I'm asking you today if you will indeed support this bill and assist me to ensure its passage.

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** The member raises a very serious issue, which was actually prompted by a tragic accident. My predecessors in the

Ministry of Transportation made road safety a priority for this government. We're very pleased that today our roads are fourth-safest in North America and second-safest in Canada. But that doesn't go far enough.

Our government is striving to ensure that we head for the safest roads in Canada and in North America. I support the member's intention; I support the principles of the bill. I'm looking forward to debating it through the standing committee and working with the member to improve the bill to ensure that we can actually help improve safety on our roads.

**Mr Galt:** Thank you, Minister, for that support. I'm pleased to know that you're in favour of my private member's bill. As I mentioned earlier today, this bill was prompted by the tragic deaths of two young men, Jason Lawrence and Bartley Mackey, who were from my riding. They were thrown out of the back of a pickup truck that accidentally slid off the road. Both boys' parents and a sister are here in the gallery today and have requested that I reintroduce this bill to ban riding in the back of pickup trucks.

Following question period, they will be in room 154. Since both families have come a long way today, Minister, they want to explain to you what it's like to be parents who have needlessly lost a son. They also want to explain to you how important this bill is to them, and particularly to their late sons. I ask if you would be willing to take some time after question period to meet with them in my office to talk about this initiative.

**Hon Mr Clark:** I can't even begin to express how important this bill would be to these families. The realities and the tragedies that can occur from youth riding in the back of pickup trucks—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Clark:** The opposition may not agree with us, but the reality is that it's a very unsafe situation and we have to do something to address it.

The member has brought in a private member's bill which, for me, really speaks loads to the essence of democracy in this House. I support the member's bringing in the bill and will support working with him, and I will meet with the families after question period today.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** My question is to the Premier. I want to raise with you a question of accountability and mismanagement. You probably know that you are two months late in announcing how much school boards will be getting this year. Colleges and universities don't know how much money they're getting.

I know that your business friends wouldn't put up with being kept in the dark for so long. When will you tell the students and parents of this province what to expect in education funding?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I'm sorry, the question was, "When will they know?" Soon.

**Mr Marchese:** Premier, my point was that you're two months late. Boards are waiting. You said you were going to behave like a business. Holding boards of education and colleges and universities in the dark for two months is not behaving like a business. I think it's highly irresponsible. I believe your fiscal plan is in total disarray. I'm telling you those boards, colleges and universities can't plan. They can't plan for how many teachers and professors they can hire. They can't plan with respect to textbooks and how many they can buy. I have to tell you, Premier, accountability cannot be a one-way street.

I'm saying to you that boards, colleges and universities expect to be treated with respect. When will they know how much they're going to get in education funding? When will they know?

1520

**Hon Mr Harris:** Certainly I acknowledge we are later this year than we would like to be. Our partners on whom we rely to deliver these services have had some preliminary information, certainly colleges and universities have, and I know school boards have received the overall direction. The individual details per board will be out very soon, as will colleges and universities.

It has been a particularly challenging year. I think you are well aware this has been a challenging budget year. Even with our tax cuts generating record new revenues for the province, health care continues to take an increasing proportion, 19% over the last two years. As you've heard, it's a very challenging budget year.

I appreciate that in opposition you have the luxury of not having to worry about these things. We on this side of the House do, and I assure you that both the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and the minister responsible for school boards, elementary and secondary, are trying to achieve the maximum amount of dollars they possibly can to continue the quality education—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The Premier's time is up. New question.

#### HIGHWAY ACCIDENT

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals, we want to offer our sympathy to the families of those people who lost their lives in the fiery crash at Dryden this morning. Could you please stand in your place, provide details to the House about that crash, and offer your assurances to the people east of Dryden that they have no reason to be concerned?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** That question falls under the responsibility of the Solicitor General.

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** Tragically, there was a collision in the early hours of this morning between two tractor trailers on Highway 17, east of Dryden. We know that there may have been hazardous materials involved. The area has in fact been boomed so that the water that was used to extinguish the fire

wouldn't leak into the creeks. Federal authorities are actively involved, as well as the OPP and Emergency Measures Ontario.

We have contacted the Canadian Nuclear Safety Council and Transport Canada, who are responsible for the transportation of hazardous materials. They will be on the scene shortly. As facts become available, we will keep you updated.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Minister, as you know, the material that at least one of the trucks was carrying was iridium, which is a radioactive material. Would you please inform the House as to whether or not Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Northern Development and Mines staff were dispatched to the scene? The accident happened at 1:30. It was still burning at 8 o'clock this morning. Could you please tell me whether those staff members arrived on the accident scene?

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** The latest information I have is that there was still smouldering and there was difficulty in getting some of the staff directly to the scene because there were, tragically, deaths involved. As I've said, we will report when we have further information, but all authorities that are appropriate are involved in this, including the Canadian Nuclear Safety Council, Transport Canada and all of our various provincial ministries, under the auspices of Emergency Measures Ontario.

#### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** My question is directed to the Attorney General and it concerns the issue of newcomers, immigrants and refugees to this fine country, this province and the city of Toronto. My riding of Etobicoke North consists of nearly 80 different diverse communities. Up until recently, from 1996, our government has financed legal aid to help those people establish themselves in this country.

They came here with very little in terms of wearing of clothes. They want to help their families and their children to get on with becoming responsible, contributing citizens of this country.

The federal government is responsible for immigration in this country, and yet in the last couple of years, nearly more, we've had not one penny of money from the federal government regarding access to legal aid for newcomers and refugees to this country.

What strategy have you been using to try to get the feds to start paying up and to turn around this deplorable state of affairs for our newcomers to this country?

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I thank the honourable member for raising what is a vitally important issue. Immigration is of great importance to this country and of great importance to this province. More than half of all new Canadians settle in Ontario.

But it is also very clear that immigration is a federal responsibility. It has been since this country was founded. The federal government controls how many



new Canadians enter this great nation. They control the process they follow, including the appeal process. All appearances by new Canadians are in front of federal panels, and appeals are to the federal courts.

We, on behalf of immigrants and refugees, spoke up on behalf of new Canadians over the past two years. The Mike Harris government insisted that there be a dependable, reliable, sustainable source of funding, and I'm pleased to say that at the 11th hour, the federal Minister of Justice did come and deal with this issue.

**Mr Hastings:** We seem to be making a little bit of progress in this uphill battle. It would be nice to have our provincial Grit friends join us in seeing that Ontario gets its fair share on this issue.

How are you going to follow up on your strategy of getting the \$20 million they owe us and end up with a permanent, multi-year funding arrangement so that our newcomers, our refugees, our immigrants to this country and to this province can get themselves settled, get their families and children settled and not have to be worried about this? Across the way, you don't hear a word of help from them.

**Hon Mr Young:** Let's be very clear: the province of Ontario has come forward and spoken out on behalf of immigrants and refugees. As a result of that, 20 million more dollars are there and available for legal aid funding in this country. The only other province that came to bat in this very important and essential cause was the province of British Columbia, which currently has an NDP government in place. I applaud our partners in British Columbia.

Let's be very clear: the \$20 million is there. It is a pot of money, and over the next few weeks we intend to pressure the federal government to ensure that at least half of those funds find their way to Ontario, because of course half of new Canadians settle in Ontario.

## LANDFILL

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Health. About eight months ago, I raised concerns with this government about health problems in a neighbourhood bounded by two old, abandoned dumps in the city of Hamilton, in my riding: the Rennie Street and Brampton Street sites. Your government has not acted in these eight months on their concerns.

In the last couple of months, I took a survey of health issues in the neighbourhood around the dump sites, with some shocking results. Of 338 respondents, 74 people reported frequent headaches, 62 reported suffering respiratory problems, 41 experienced dizziness and nausea, and 15 were suffering from cancer.

This is a small neighbourhood in an old part of the city. These dumps were shut down in 1962. These people are suffering. They have legitimate, serious health concerns that they are worried about. Will your government commit today to undertake a health study in the area affected by the abandoned landfill sites?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the

information and will take it under advisement. I can say that some of these issues are shared, in terms of responsibility, with the public health officer in the jurisdiction. If they have any information we should be aware of or that other ministries should be aware of, we certainly would take that under advisement. I can only say that generally at this time, and would be happy to work with the member on any information he has available.

**Mr Agostino:** Minister, I appreciate that you are going to take it under advisement. Appreciate that I raised my concern eight months ago with the Minister of the Environment, who didn't have the courtesy to respond for four months, and that I raised this in a letter in March to the new Minister of the Environment, who then passed it on to you. So I'm shocked that you don't have any idea what the issue is.

1530

These dump sites were shut down in 1962. Studies have shown there are no records of what was put in these landfill sites. Recent studies on the liquids coming out of these sites show PCBs 30,000 times above the acceptable level and ammonia 20,000 times above the acceptable level. These are serious chemicals. They are connected to the health issues I raised earlier.

Let me tell you about a double standard. When concerns were raised in Stoney Creek, Minister, your government did the right thing and had a health study as part of the dump issue in Stoney Creek. Why is that not good enough for the people of Hamilton East if it's good enough for the people of Stoney Creek? Those health concerns are just as serious.

Will you commit today to a health study for the people on the east side of Hamilton who are affected by these two old, abandoned dump sites?

**Hon Mr Clement:** The way the honourable member asked the question, he realizes this is a complex issue. There are issues of ownership, issues of liability, issues of health—which of course should be paramount—issues of environmental concern, issues that are more local in nature and involve the medical officer of health in the jurisdiction. By asking the question the way he did, he acknowledges implicitly that it's a complex issue. It deserves a considered and coherent answer. I'm not going to reply off the cuff. I'm certainly willing to take it under advisement. If the honourable member has information he wishes to share with me, I'd certainly welcome that.

## TAX REVENUES

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I have a question for the Premier. Many Ontarians are concerned about gas prices. The feds collect a lot of taxes. Can you tell us how much the federal government spends on roads and highways with this money they collect?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Certainly rising gas prices, along with rising energy prices, are big concerns to Ontarians. Indeed, they're big concerns to all

Canadians. To reply specifically to the question, my understanding is that the amount of gas tax collected by Ottawa returned for transportation is around 5% across the country and probably less in Ontario since their support for roads and transportation infrastructure in Ontario is minimal.

**Mr Tascona:** As you know, I was on the task force on gasoline prices. I and the member for Durham issued a report with respect to gasoline prices, asking the federal government to deal with a number of our recommendations. I understand they haven't dealt with them.

I understand that in addition to the taxes the federal government collects, it also has an interest in Petro-Canada. My question for the Premier is, can you tell us how well that investment is doing?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I appreciate the member's question and his concern about gas prices. Some have advocated a California type of electricity freeze solution, and we saw the disaster that created in supply. Clearly it has to be a national solution; I think we all understand this.

Our difficulty with gas taxes is that I'm not persuaded that any level of tax increase is responsible for price increase, because there's not an active, vibrant, competitive marketplace there; they're setting the price on supply and shortage of it. The problem then is, is there a government benefiting from a higher price? We know that the higher the price is, the more GST the federal government gets, and we think that's wrong.

Worse than that, they are an 18% owner of Petro-Canada. The profits from Petro-Canada are up 383%. This is \$893 million. The federal share of this more than tripling of the profits is \$160,000,740. So we can see the federal government seems to have a vested interest in higher gas prices, and we think that for a Liberal government that's wrong.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** My question is to the Premier. I, along with my leader, Howard Hampton, am calling on your help today to assist us with the fairly serious problem we have in northeastern Ontario and northwestern Ontario. As you know, l'Hôpital Notre-Dame de Hearst, the Porcupine Health Unit, as well as the district health council and my office have been working to try to establish dialysis services for the patients of Hearst. This spring we had five patients who needed to travel from Hearst to Kapuskasing, more than 100 kilometres, in order to get life-saving dialysis treatments in the community of Kapuskasing. We've asked that in the interim, as we look to expand dialysis services into Hearst, your ministry at the very least approve northern travel grants for those patients who have to travel from the community of Hearst to Kapuskasing. Unfortunately, your ministry is taking a bureaucratic look and saying the communities, according to the atlas, are 97 kilometres apart, but in reality the patients are having to travel more than 100 kilometres.

Will you as a fellow northerner help us fix this problem and ensure that these patients are paid the travel grant they deserve in order to get what is life-saving treatment?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the Minister of Health can respond.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. Indeed, I'm aware of the issue that he has raised in this House. He has been corresponding with myself and my predecessor about this very question.

As the honourable member knows, the northern health travel grant is there to help defray transportation costs for those residents in northern Ontario who must travel a long distance to see a medical specialist or to visit a designated health care facility. It's there for that purpose. It's a unique program. There's no program like it in southern Ontario. It is specifically there for northern Ontario residents to help defray some of those costs.

One of the issues, of course, is where do you draw the line? One of the lines that was drawn was 100 kilometres. The honourable member has a case where there is a discrepancy or a disagreement over whether the particular patient is 97 kilometres or over 100 kilometres. That is an issue that is obviously on the line and that we have to have continued discussions about, and I'm willing to take the honourable member's advice on it.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Supplementary?

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Minister, I've sent you three letters from cancer patients who have to travel long distances in northwestern Ontario to access cancer treatment. One, Mr Rudy from Red Lake, has to travel five and a half hours into Winnipeg to access cancer treatment. The second letter is from his doctor. The other patient, from Dryden, has to travel four hours into Thunder Bay to access cancer treatment. The travel grant only gives them a small amount of their actual travel costs. We know that if they lived in southern Ontario, their treatment costs to fly them to Thunder Bay, to Sudbury, to Cleveland, to Detroit, would be fully covered.

Minister, how do you justify fully covering the travel costs of some patients while these patients have to travel very long distances at very great expense to access cancer treatment and you give them the most meagre of help? How do you justify that, and will you do something about it?

**Hon Mr Clement:** There are a couple of things embedded in that question. First of all, the travel grant is there, a unique program for northern Ontario residents on issues relating to any health care concerns that qualify for the program.

Then you've got a travel grant program run by Cancer Care Ontario which is open to all residents of Ontario, including northern Ontario residents, if they have to travel a certain distance. So it is open and accessible to every single resident in the province of Ontario.

If the honourable member then asks how I can justify the fact that persons in southern Ontario are being paid to



go to Buffalo or paid to go to Detroit, the answer is that I'm trying to fix that. That's the answer that relates to Sunnybrook, which the honourable member has opposed every step of the way. Rampant hypocrisy is not something that is pretty, and that's why—

**The Speaker:** Order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** You have to withdraw that.

**Hon Mr Clement:** That's what I just did, but I would suggest to the honourable member that he be consistent when he criticizes the very thing that is solving the problem of people going to Buffalo, people going to Cleveland, people going to Detroit for their cancer care. Do not hold that up as an example in the very next question about how—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up.

### HIGHWAY 407

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** My question today is about Highway 407. Minister of Transportation, you have repeatedly refused to make public any details of your sweetheart deal with Lavalin. Tolls have gone up as much as 57%. Licence renewals were denied to motorists for non-payment when in fact poor customer service and wrongful billing were at fault. You made a deal that gave your rich pals carte blanche with no protection for working families—at least none that we know of, because you refuse to make the contract public.

I have here a bill for over \$3,000 for sign damage sent to a motorist involved in an accident on the 407 during a blizzard. It was not the driver's fault. No charges were laid. For all I know, maybe Lavalin didn't clear the roads. Here is another example of working families being gouged yet again.

1540

Tell me, minister, are there any protections at all for taxpayers and working families in that contract?

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** The 407 is undoubtedly one of the biggest successes the province of Ontario has ever seen. The tolls on the 407 are the lowest in North America when it comes to that type of highway: 11 cents per kilometre for the 407; the San Joaquin in California is 14.2 cents per kilometre; Foothills in California is 15 cents per kilometre; eastern California is 24 cents per kilometre. Quite clearly, our tolls are the lowest.

But I think the honourable member should listen to the Liberal Party on the other side. When they had their big Liberalfest, they had Donald Macdonald down, who stated "Highway 407 in the greater Toronto area is an example of good public and private sector partnership"—a former finance minister.

**Mr Hoy:** I assume that the minister will be revealing the contract shortly—today, as a matter of fact.

I have the accident report and I have the bills. Once again, your corporate friends are making a presumption of guilt. Their information, once again, is wrong. The accident occurred at Weston Road, yet the bill says "east

of Highway 400." It says, "overhead sign damage," yet the motorist didn't hit an overhead sign. The icing on the cake is a \$565 administration cost. Wow, for all the incorrect information, \$565.

Is this what taxpayers and hard-working families have in store for them when you push ahead your privatization and your toll road agenda?

**Hon Mr Clark:** Accidents happen on highways and roadways and they're usually between insurance companies and the driver. Highway 407 is a success. But what I find puzzling about the Liberal Party is Dalton McGuinty's response to Donald Macdonald's statement about the success of Highway 407. Dalton McGuinty said that while these types of partnerships aren't new, the concept is new for his party. "There are a number of areas where the public-private sector should work together," and he cited hydro deregulation as an example.

I think the Liberal Party has to get their act together. Do they support public-private partnerships or not? Because they can't suck and blow.

### ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. I read in the paper this morning that the federal government is today planning to announce funding for arts and culture, including funding for the CBC and the book publishing and sound recording industries. We know that the arts are a major contributor to the economy and that they enrich our lives and our communities. I appreciate that the government has reinvested significantly in arts and culture in the province, but one of the concerns I've heard from the arts and cultural organizations is that they need to be able to plan ahead. Can you tell me what the government is doing to support arts and culture in Ontario and what your ministry is doing to ensure that arts and cultural organizations have stable funding, even in lean years?

**Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation):** I thank the member from Scarborough Centre for her question. In fact, I appreciate her ongoing interest in the arts and cultural community and I want to commend her for her work, as the minister for Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, when she brought in some major new initiatives and outlined the vision the Mike Harris government upholds today.

As part of that vision, we've made investments into programs like the arts endowment fund, providing for long-term sustainability of the arts sector to encourage private sector donations and individual donors. In addition, \$30 million went to the Ontario Media Development Corp to initiate and plan for development of the cultural industries, certainly world leaders in Ontario in many of these industries, and authors, musicians, visual artists and animation, and we're supporting that in the Mike Harris government; as well, \$20 million to the cultural attractions fund to help bring major events to Ontario to attract more tourists and support our cultural community,

a strong, long-term commitment to sustainability in arts and culture from the Mike Harris government.

## PETITIONS

### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** There's still extraordinary frustration related to the northern health travel grant. Petitions continue to come in. We will continue to fight the battle.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

"Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents, and therefore that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

"Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north, which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

"Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical locations;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in our communities."

I have hundreds of people who have signed these petitions and I'm pleased once again to add my name to the petition.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has cut funding for regulated child care spaces in Ontario by 15% between 1995 and 1998;

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has yet to implement the recommendations of its own commissioned Early Years report by Dr Fraser

Mustard to create a seamless, integrated early years education system;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million over the next five years from the federal government for early years development projects;

"Whereas the Conservative government lags behind other provinces in announcing its plans for the \$844 million in federal money for early years development; and

"Whereas other provinces are implementing innovative, affordable and accessible child care programs, such as Quebec's \$5-a-day child care program ... ;

"Whereas the need for affordable, accessible, regulated child care and family resources" centres "continues to grow in Ontario;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Harris government immediately match and earmark a significant portion of the \$844 million from the federal government for expanded regulated child care spaces" and family resource programs."

This is signed by about 51 parents and staff from Centretown Parents co-op daycare in Ottawa. I agree with the petitioners and I affix my signature to it.

### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas on September 27, 1997, Cambridge was legally designated underserved, having an insufficient number of family doctors for its citizens; and

"Whereas thousands of men, women and children in Cambridge are not cared for by their own family physician and this unfortunate situation exists in other Ontario communities;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government substantially increase the number of family doctors in Cambridge and other underserved areas by:

"1. Permitting substantial numbers of qualified and highly competent foreign-trained family doctors the right to practise in Cambridge and other underserved areas in Ontario; and

"2. Substantially increase the number of available student spaces in Ontario medical schools and require new graduates to serve in Cambridge and other underserved areas in Ontario."

This petition is signed by over 300 good citizens of Cambridge and I affix my name thereto.

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it has been determined that recent funding allocations to the developmental services sector in the



communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent, and Windsor-Essex have been determined to be grossly inadequate to meet critical and urgent needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Community and Social Services immediately review the funding allocations to the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent, and Windsor-Essex, and provide funding in keeping with the requests made by families or their agents."

I affix my signature to this petition.

1550

#### KARLA HOMOLKA

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads in part:

"Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka, resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

"Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to pass to leave prison with an escort; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario will:

"Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

"Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

"Fight" Ottawa's "plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

"Ensure that the Ontario government's sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible."

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### VETERINARY SERVICES

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the North Hastings community of Bancroft and the surrounding area is a predominantly rural geographic area that faces many of the same challenges that northern communities contend with, whereby the role of livestock plays a significant part in that economy; and

"Whereas the community is experiencing a crisis due to the fact that their veterinarian for large animals has

indicated he can no longer provide services to the Bancroft area, and there are no immediate alternatives for animal care within their geographic area; and

"Whereas the only known incentive program for veterinarians is funded through the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines "and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to work together to find a solution to this immediate crisis. We call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce measures that would create incentives for veterinarians to practise within the described northern and rural communities in order to abate this emergency situation and to prevent similar crises in the future."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

#### MANDATORY INFLUENZA VACCINATION

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I have a petition to the Legislature and it reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas the government proposes through legislation to enforce mandatory influenza vaccine and amantadine administration for health care workers;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"To terminate the proposal for legislation which would force health care workers to receive mandatory flu vaccines or amantadine administration. This proposal, which does not allow individuals to refuse invasive and possibly dangerous medical procedures, categorically violates the basic freedoms and rights guaranteed by our Constitution. As members of a free society, we should not be denied the right to protect our health. In addition, we should not be at risk of losing gainful employment if we choose not to comply. We want the right to choose whether or not to be vaccinated."

It's signed by in excess of 736 signatures.

#### GOVERNMENT CUTS

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I have a petition here which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and was given to me by Janet Collins, one of our community activists.

It states as follows:

"A citizens' petition to Premier Michael Harris:

"Whereas the cuts imposed on Ontario by Mike Harris and his cabinet target the poorest members of our province and will cause enormous harm to both the working poor and recipients of social assistance; and

"Whereas the cuts in areas of housing, social services like counselling, community centres and drop-ins, health care, education and municipal funding do not save money in the long run and will lead to high social costs and waste of potential from citizens of Ontario; and

"Whereas abandoning the moral and social responsibility of government will serve to put enormous pressure on cash-strapped municipalities, increase local taxes and will destroy the social fabric in Ontario,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to pressure the Premier and his cabinet to restore funding that has been cut to the citizens of Ontario and protect the interests of all of its citizens, regardless of economic status."

I totally agree with this petition and I affix my signature to it as well.

#### HORSE RIDING SAFETY

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas an increasing number of Ontarians are turning to horseback riding as a recreational activity; and

"Whereas many of these inexperienced riders are children; and

"Whereas currently there are no minimum safety standards regulating riding establishments; and

"Whereas coroners' inquests into horse riding fatalities from as long ago as 1977 have called for the mandatory use of riding helmets and boots; and

"Whereas an unacceptable number of preventable injuries and fatalities have occurred while horseback riding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass into law the private member's bill introduced by Tina Molinari, MPP for Thornhill, entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, in order to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used, and to amend the Highway Traffic Act and make it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to ride a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment."

I add my signature to this.

#### SOCIAL AUDIT

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has undertaken a massive reform of the way social service programs are managed and delivered in this province; and

"Whereas the government's language, actions and policies over the last six years have reinforced the worst kind of stereotypes about people on social assistance without offering Ontarians any proof that the policies they've put in place are meeting the needs of those whose circumstances have forced them to seek temporary assistance from Ontario's social safety net; and

"Whereas this government when challenged on how well their Ontario Works programs are working, points to welfare caseload numbers as their one and only measurement of success or failure; and

"Whereas a social audit would determine how this government's policies are impacting on low-income children and families and allow for enhancements to improve the well-being, employability and economic security of individuals and families in need;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the government of Ontario conduct a social audit of its Ontario Works program."

This is a campaign across the province. People from London, Ontario, have sent this in.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition addressed to Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the good people of Ottawa. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has cut funding for regulated child care spaces in Ontario by 15% between 1995 and 1998;

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has yet to implement the recommendations of its own commission's Early Years report by Dr Fraser Mustard to create a seamless, integrated early years education system;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million over the next five years from the federal government for early years development projects;

"Whereas the Conservative government lags behind other provinces in announcing its plans for the \$844 million in federal money for early years development;

"Whereas other provinces are implementing innovative, affordable and accessible child care programs, such as Quebec's \$5-a-day child care program...;

"Whereas the need for affordable, accessible, regulated child care and family resource centres continues to grow in Ontario,

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Harris government immediately match and earmark a significant portion of the \$844 million from the federal government for expanded regulated child care spaces."

I agree with the petitioners and I have affixed my signature to this.

1600

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas over 500,000 people in Ontario have diabetes; and

"Whereas to the expense of treating diabetes, many people cannot afford the ongoing expense of treating diabetes and if left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can lead to blindness, vascular disease, kidney disease, neuropathy and other problems; and



"Whereas today, more than ever before, people with diabetes can expect to live active, independent and vital lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful management of the disease; and

"Whereas by providing the resources to successfully manage this disease, the government can ensure more efficient health care for people with diabetes at a reduced cost to the health care system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

## OPPOSITION DAY

### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** This is the NDP opposition day, and our motion is as follows:

Be it resolved that this House declares unequivocally that the government should abandon electricity deregulation and privatization in Ontario; and that it should set up a new system of accountable public power. The Energy Competition Act should be repealed and replaced with a Public Power Act and Ontario Power Generation's sale of 65% of its generation capacity must be permanently halted. The Ontario Energy Board should be given the power to set electricity rates and approve or veto major generation projects by the major power provider. There should also be a legislative requirement that affordable energy conservation initiatives be given priority over new generation projects; and that when new generation is built, that renewable green power be given priority.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott):** Mr Hampton has moved that this House declares unequivocally that the government should abandon electricity deregulation and privatization in Ontario—

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker:** Dispense. I recognize the member for Kenora-Rainy River.

**Mr Hampton:** I cannot tell the people of Ontario how urgent this issue is because, as we've been finding out here in the Legislature every day now, the government's strategy for energy deregulation and electricity privatization is growing beyond what anyone in this province might have expected.

Let me say clearly what the NDP position is. We believe that privatization and deregulation of Ontario's electricity system must be cancelled now. This is a dirty deal cooked up by the Conservative Party to please their corporate friends. It is not good for the environment; it is not good for Ontario consumers; it is not good for Ontario industry. What this is all about is essentially selling off Ontario's electricity supply, which has provided dependable, predictable electrical power at reliable

prices, selling that off to international energy corporations who will then want to take power generated in Ontario and sell it into the American market, where they can get a much higher price and make much higher profits. At the end of the day, Ontario consumers and Ontario industries will either have to pay the much higher American prices or watch our electricity being exported. At the end of it all, it will cost Ontarians a great deal of money.

We've heard the government say, "Oh, Ontario has an adequate supply of power." But as we've learned from the declarations of US President George Bush and US Vice-President Cheney, the issue of the adequacy of Ontario's supply isn't the question. The question is, what is the demand for power in the United States? They admit that there is a 43% increase in demand, that there is a shortage of supply. They have indicated that the United States would have to build another electrical generating station a week for the next 20 years to meet their demand. So it's very clear that what this government proposes to do—and I might add, the Liberals are in favour of it too—they are prepared to put an end to an Ontario electricity strategy and to put Ontario into a continental electricity strategy, or certainly an American electricity strategy. At the end of the day, Ontarians will either have to pay more for our own power or we'll have to sit by and watch our electricity be exported to the United States.

The price of power in a place like New York City is 123% higher than it is here. In Boston, it's 80% higher; in Detroit, it's 50% higher; in Chicago, it's 60% higher. Then when you forecast in the increasing demand in the United States, as given to us by US President Bush and Vice-President Cheney, it's very clear that the demand in the United States is going to drive prices even higher.

They're desperately trying to not tell people this: this government is simply going to open up and sell off our electricity generation capacity and basically fold us into that American market, but they don't want people to know. We in the NDP insist that people must know, that people across Ontario must know that this is the real agenda.

When we ask the Premier and the Minister of Energy, "What are you going to do to ensure that Ontarians aren't stuck with paying much higher prices?" they say, "Oh well, we are going to guarantee that Ontario's interests are looked after first." There is absolutely nothing in the legislation that can do that. Then they say, "The independent market operator will do that." Once the stations are sold off, the independent market operator will not be able to do that. Electricity is a commodity under the trade deals that Canada has signed. If those private corporations want to sell the power in Chicago, Detroit, Boston or New York, there is not a damn thing, under the trade deals we have signed, that the Ontario government or the independent market operator can do. There is nothing they can do. If they do try to do something, we will find ourselves before the WTO or a NAFTA panel faster than you can snap your fingers. This is the sellout

of Ontario's electricity. This government, while trying to deny it, is having to make up a different story every day.

We need to look at what has happened in other jurisdictions when they have simply deregulated, sold off their generating capacity to international corporations. That is exactly what's happened in California. Oh yes, after California did it—after they deregulated and privatized all of their electricity generation capacity and they saw that prices were going to go out of sight—they tried to step in and set a rate cap and insist that the private operators deliver their power to California. That's exactly what Mr Harris says they would do here and what Mr Wilson says they would do. We've now seen what a disaster that was in California.

Once you have sold off the generating capacity, you can try whatever means you want—those private energy corporations are not in the business of charity. They frankly will not care if individual Ontarians or Ontario industries receive access to power. They will be interested in one thing and one thing only: how much they can make in terms of money and profit. If they can make more money exporting the power to the United States, they will do it.

The Minister of Energy, when he was confronted with this, said, "There is not the transmission capacity. We don't have the transmission lines to move all of Ontario's power to the United States." So he says, "It won't happen." Well, Vice-President Cheney was here and said, "Don't worry. The Americans are prepared to build the transmission lines." They're prepared to build the transmission lines to get all of our power. So another argument by the Minister of Energy and the Premier shot down. There is no capacity to guarantee that Ontario interests have to be looked after first once you privatize. Secondly, this business that the transmission lines don't exist: the American have said they will build those transmission lines—like that. They want our power.

All someone needs to do is look at what has happened in Alberta. Alberta, again, followed the model of California. They privatized. The city of Edmonton did not want to get into the grid. They forced everybody into the privatized and deregulated grid and we have seen the price of power increase in Alberta by two and three times. We now see industries in Alberta that cannot operate their manufacturing processes during the day because the cost of power is too high. So people have to schedule their work, and they schedule the manufacturing production between about 11 o'clock at night and 6 o'clock in the morning, which is the only time that they can now afford to buy power. That is already starting to happen here in Ontario.

1610

Talk to anyone in the pulp and paper industry. The pulp and paper industry is very intensive in terms of its use of electricity to produce pulp and paper. I had the manager of the mill in my own hometown, Fort Frances, come in to me and say, "We now know that we face a 30% increase in the cost of our electrical power, and because we use so much electricity in the production of

pulp and paper, it means that our costs of production are going to go out of sight." He literally said to me, "We have to realistically look at shutting down our paper mill during the months of December, January and February, because we would not be able to afford the cost of electricity."

The mill manager in Kenora, which is shut down right now and will be shut down for at least another week, when he was interviewed by the media said very clearly that part of the reason they are shut down is because of the increasing cost of electricity. As this government ramps up the system and prepares to sell it off and privatize, they are already increasing the prices. So the increase that was announced about three and a half weeks ago, an 8% increase in electricity bills, by the government, will add \$3.7 million a year to the cost line of that mill. The manager was very clear. He said, "If there are further increases in the cost of electricity, we may be looking at shutting down. We simply will not be able to continue to afford this high-cost electricity in terms of manufacturing paper." That's 850 jobs—like that; 850 jobs in one community. Why? Because this government refuses to acknowledge that it has a responsibility to Ontario citizens and to Ontario industry, and it thinks that it should be implementing George Bush's agenda for the United States.

I just want to say a few words about the alternative. This government tried to sell this out there to the public in Ontario by saying, "This deregulation is actually going to lead to lower costs." That's what they said. I can give you the quotations of the Minister of Energy, Jim Wilson, going back to 1998, and it's quite incredible that he said this and now he's trying to deny it.

Jim Wilson, October 29, 1998: "Anywhere competition has been introduced in this world, savings have been between 8% and 40%. Nowhere have prices gone up." I wish he'd done some research on California and Alberta before he made that statement. Then he said on October 27, 1998, "Certainly all that we're doing in terms of energy reform in this province, electricity reform, is to bring lower rates to consumers. The plan that the Minister of Finance and the group of experts put forward and presented to you yesterday indicates that prices will remain stable and indeed go down over the next few years as competition is introduced." Then on June 17, 1998, he said, "But we're also following many other jurisdictions in the world—Australia, New Zealand, Britain, California.... We've seen over the last decade, with the introduction of competition in the natural gas sector ... that not only did it bring greater consumer choice but prices have gone down."

I invite the Minister of Energy to go out there and make those arguments today, where people have seen 70% increases in their natural gas bill, where people in California have seen the price of electricity triple and then they're facing a further 70% increase this year, but at the same time there are energy brownouts and blackouts, and in Alberta they've seen the cost of energy triple by three times.





Burke, "owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices" that judgement "to your opinion." That's going to be part of the text from which I want to speak.

Our friend from Kenora rightly brings to this chamber today a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. I will say to him and to his colleagues that I and my colleagues share, to a real degree, some of his analysis of the problem. And, make no mistake, there is a real problem for this Legislature, this government and this province. However, I cannot accept his remedy, and more of that later.

I have this afternoon roughly 32 or 33 minutes, and I want to cover some ground. Members of this Legislature, I hope, understand something about electricity in this province. I'm not going to talk about the great and storied history of Ontario Hydro. You can go to our library down the hall. There are books and stacks of reports—over a century of good intentions and screw-ups and foul-ups and governments of all stripes not doing what they said they were going to do in the public interest.

I say this as someone who has more than his share of sins for which atonement is due. Some of you new members have more latitude, less difficulty, than some of us old geezers. It is because of my experience, both in government and in the Legislature, that I feel so strongly about the issue that is before us and, quite frankly, the issue that we are ignoring.

In a bipartisan and ecumenical way, I have been noticing and quite frankly applaud the efforts by the member for Kenora in recent days to try to heighten the legislative and public awareness about this issue. It is not going to go away.

Electricity cuts to the core of the economic and social well-being of this province. I live in eastern Ontario. Three or four years ago, my friend Guzzo and others, we had an ice storm that took electricity away from us for the better part of 10 or 12 days in the middle of the Canadian winter. If you ever needed to understand the salience and the uniqueness of electricity, let me tell you, the ice storm of 1998 was an experience to drive that point home.

This electricity is a commodity that we cannot live without and we cannot store. We must have it and we cannot store it. It's not just about the economy. It's about what goes on at the Pembroke hospital, at Algonquin College, at Lyn McLeod's pulp mill, down on the farm in Lambton county. Absolutely essential, and we cannot store it. And today we will need probably in excess of 20,000 or 22,000 megawatts to keep the lights on across the homes, schools, hospitals, barns and pulp mills of this province.

I agree with Mr Hampton that there are problems. It was only five years ago that this government asked the panel headed by the former Minister of Finance for Canada, Donald S. Macdonald, ably supported by Darcy McKeough, Jan Carr, John Grant and Professor Waverman from the University of Toronto, to look at this electricity issue and to recommend change to public policy.

Earlier today, the Minister of Highways was talking about Donald Macdonald's commentary on Highway 407. That's interesting, I am sure. But to me today and to us as a community it is far more important that we understand what Macdonald recommended. The so-called Macdonald committee, the advisory committee, recommending policy change to the Ontario government with respect to electricity, what did they recommend five years ago in the spring of 1996? They would agree with my friend from Kenora that there is a problem. There is a real problem. It was a problem building over decades. Time doesn't permit me to dissect all of that difficulty. Let me say, though, in a very bipartisan way, members on all sides of this House were in governments over decades; we all tried and we all failed to some real degree. It was not, the old hydro, public enterprise without benefit, let me say quite clearly.

But by the mid-1990s, what did we have? We had a generation facility that was in deep trouble. Sixty per cent of our generating capacity was in the nuclear power division and we were told by outside experts and by our own national regulator there were very severe and systemic problems. The national atomic regulator got very close, in the time when we were in government and later when the NDP was in government, to shutting down some of these big flagship generators. We didn't know about it. We didn't know about it in the Legislature, we didn't know about it in government, and it didn't matter whether the Premier was Liberal, Tory or New Democrat, apparently.

Let me say at this point that Ontario Hydro does represent a very important part of our economy. I want to be very clear: I and my Liberal colleagues believe that there is an enormous public interest in this electricity question, an absolutely critical public interest that must be recognized, that cannot be trivialized and that cannot be sold off to special interests who have always, always hovered around this question. Why? This electricity business in Ontario today is an annual business worth \$10 billion. You betcha, there are big profits to be made. There are important assets to be looked at.

I want to say at the outset that my colleagues believe that there must be public policy that recognizes and protects the public interest in electricity. That's why we believe, for example, that an appropriate policy for the future in this province is a competitive marketplace for the generation of electricity in which there are significant public generators, but yes, there will be some private generators. There will hopefully be some large and middle-sized generators, and there will be some small generators, and they will be regionally distributed around this very large province, from Ottawa to Atikokan, from Pembroke to Petrolia.

1630

It was never intended, I say to the House, that Ontario Hydro become a monopoly generator. Hydro was intended as a monopoly transmitter, but it was never written anywhere that Hydro was to be a monopoly generator. Donald Macdonald and his colleagues, in their



core recommendation to the Harris government five years ago, said the status quo is not an option. What you need to do more than anything else, the core of good public policy, preserving and protecting the public interest, is to create a competitive marketplace for the generation of electricity. Macdonald specifically and repeatedly recommended in this report that the generating assets of Ontario Hydro be broken up into several publicly owned but competing public generators.

That basic recommendation was not accepted by the Harris government, and therein lies the crux of a serious and ever-worsening problem. The government did not accept the core recommendation, and if you don't believe me, just read Minister Wilson's white paper, responding as it did to the Macdonald report in November 1997. The white paper did not accept the core recommendation that almost immediately the generating assets of the public monopoly that was Ontario Hydro be broken up into several publicly owned but competing companies.

The issue here, if we're going to get out of a tight corner, and it is a tight corner getting tighter all the time—and I want to say to the House, I want to say to my constituents and I want to say to the broader public: this is an issue where there are no easy answers. I share the concern of my friends, I think, everywhere in this House, to hear the American vice-president come to this city 36 hours ago and say, "It's all about supply. Conservation is really a private virtue and doesn't factor into good public policy."

I think that's outrageous and obscene. Conservation and demand management do have a more important role to play in the electricity policy of this province and other jurisdictions. If we don't recognize that, then I'm going to tell you that immorality seems to be the principle driver of our policy. If we can look at the Second and Third Worlds and say it's all about supply and we will go anywhere, into the Arctic and God knows wherever else, into the Sudan, and we will rape the resources to keep the air conditioner on in Houston or in Toronto, boy, that's not a policy that I want to meet my maker defending.

But having said that, there are no easy answers. We need, in this industrialized province, at least 25,000 megawatts. Our summer and winter peaks take us up to about 23,000 or 24,000 megawatts, and we do have some reserve. In that sense, I agree with Minister Wilson. We are not yet California or Alberta. But we do not have a great deal of time. We are growing in this province, happily. That means that the demand for electricity is also rising. The annual rate of electricity growth in Ontario in the last 10 years is something in the order of 1.4% or 1.5% per year. Add that up and you need more capacity. You can get that with new supply and you can get that with some demand management.

But I say to my friend from Kenora, which creek are you going to dam? Which natural gas plant are you going to build? I say it to myself. I've been around this debate. There aren't any easy choices. Every choice will have a consequence.

Natural gas today is three times more expensive than it was 18 months ago. Do you know why? In part—not the

only reason—90% of all new or planned electricity generation in North America plans to use natural gas as a feedstock. That more than anything else is driving the price of that commodity skyward. Do you think the New Democratic Premiers of Saskatchewan and British Columbia, at least until next week, or the Conservative Premier of Nova Scotia, are interested in not selling their natural gas to generators, whether they're domestic or international?

But back to what the government has not done. Yes, there's a problem. This Macdonald committee made it plain that if we were going to move forward, we were going to have to accept a rigorously regulated but competitive marketplace for the generation of electricity. I repeat: a rigorously regulated marketplace, wherein there would be several generators, many of them public, some of them private, and some of them may be local and municipal.

I agree with Macdonald. I don't think there's a way forward unless and until we get a reasonably competitive marketplace for the generation, because otherwise we will never know what the true options are, what the true costs are. We have left for successive generations at least \$20 billion of so-called stranded debt. Do you know what? According to the Provincial Auditor and Energy Probe, in the first year of the new Hydro order, I'm sorry to say, under Premier Harris and Minister Wilson, we have apparently added another \$1 billion to that indebtedness. That's not me talking; that's Energy Probe and the Provincial Auditor.

The minister is going to say, "Well, no, that's not quite true." My question to him is, if it is or isn't, how would we know? We know less about Hydro today than we knew two or three years ago. We have removed those successor companies from any kind of freedom of information. We know less about Hydro today than we did three years ago. Some of the commercial privacy I understand. But the story over the decades with this file is you always tell the cabinet, you always tell the Legislature years after the sin is committed what the sin was and what the residual price has been.

I repeat: the Harris government, to its credit, appointed a blue ribbon panel of smart people to give it advice about a serious problem. The core and the most fundamental recommendation these people made was that there should be a competitive marketplace for the generation of electricity. That did not happen. And it's worse, because the Macdonald commission also suggested—and I can read the part of the report, it's page 126. They say specifically, quoting from the Macdonald report, "Ontario Hydro Retail should not pursue opportunities to expand its electricity distribution business into new territory." That was a clear recommendation.

What has Ontario Hydro Retail done under the noses of this government, in the face of this Legislature, I say to my friends everywhere? They are out remonopolizing the retail sector. They are paying 35% premiums to buy things like Brampton Hydro, Brockville Hydro, Ailsa Craig Hydro, Thorold Hydro. They are spending

hundreds of millions of dollars they don't have, paying premium prices to buy utilities they don't need, and in the face of a recommendation specifically not to do it. And we sit here naked and silent and let it happen. I'm asked now—

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** Relax.

**Mr Conway:** I am not relaxed because I can't believe this is happening. You see, we are asked to support a recommendation to say, "Let's keep doing it." I, for one, have had enough. I can't believe that responsible members of the Legislature want to endorse this. I'm not making this up.

We've got another report by a very able group of people, again to the credit of the government, the Market Design Committee, headed by Ron Daniels, the dean of the faculty of law at the University of Toronto. They were asked to give some advice. I don't have time to read it. You should read from their second report, June 1998, what they have to say about market power. Can you imagine a competitive marketplace with one elephant having 80% to 90% of the market capacity? Ron Daniels and the Market Design Committee said that is a mistake and all of their mitigation measures are entirely second-best.

1640

They actually wrote a letter, talking about some of the behaviour of the government, how one of the hydro companies was out hiring lobbyists to basically undercut and change policy that the Market Design Committee had recommended after a lot of hearing. That's exactly what I would expect. These are very strong, well-resourced companies. Ontario PowerGen: Ron Osborne came to a committee. When the government said, "We're about competition and we're not about monopoly, public or private," what did Ron Osborne say to the committee? "In this business," he said, "it's eat or be eaten and we intend to grow." And they are growing.

The question the Legislature has to deal with is, are you for competition?

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** Yes.

**Mr Conway:** If you are, you simply have to stand up as members of this government particularly and stop the madness that's occurring.

I am simply citing the expert testimony and I'm not here, like some people in this debate, to suggest easy answers. Prices are going up. I said that two years ago, when Jim Wilson and others said prices are coming down. You could not have listened to the testimony and come to any other conclusion than prices are likely to go up before they come down. I want them to come down, I do not want to see high prices. But the member for Kenora is absolutely right: we were told, "Do this and prices are going down." Do you know that bulk power rate increase of 8%? For retail customers, that's going to mean at least 12% this summer, and people I respect tell me that if the market opens next May, expect electricity prices to increase by at least another 20%.

The other problem from the government's point of view is that government is sitting in this situation in a

complete conflict of interest. Let me use a hockey analogy. We've got a situation today where the Ontario government, the only shareholder basically in the two successor companies—the power generation company, PowerGen, and the hydro retail company, Hydro One. We are the majority shareholders in those companies, the only shareholders for all intents and purposes, so we own those companies. We wrote the rules for the game in which they're now engaged. We hired the referee. We own the arena, and we have a vested financial interest in the outcome of the game.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean):** Sounds like Chrétien.

**Mr Conway:** It may be, but I'm here, and we've got a problem, all of us. I give the government some credit: they started out as any government would have had to have done five years ago in saying, "We are at the end of a road. We cannot carry on without some change." But let me tell you, we are headed for a cliff, and I don't personally think, at the rate we're going, the government has any hope of keeping its date of market opening next May.

The government's conflict of interest here is very troubling, and I'll be quite honest, I would say this I guess of any government, not necessarily the incumbent government faced with this situation. That's why I feel so strongly, as do my colleagues, that there has to be some kind of legislative oversight. This is a place, in my view, where for the next few years there should be a standing or a select committee to hound-dog this policy, to make sure that what is being promised is in fact being delivered; to the extent that it's not, there are good and valid reasons for change or amendment.

There was an article in the *ROB* magazine the other day, Andrew Nikiforuk talking about the Alberta system. We're not Alberta and we're not California. We've got some surplus capacity. I personally believe we will be all right in terms of supply for a few years to come. But nobody is coming into this market really, despite what the minister is saying, because the rules—the thing has been gained in favour of the government companies.

The best example of that is Hydro One. This Legislature, when it passed the Electricity Act of 1998, gained the rules in favour of Hydro One, and they are out taking those advantages at full sale. They have, over the last year and a half, bought up nearly 90 utilities, some small and some large, like Brampton Hydro. It's mind-boggling that we're letting them do this, because this was nobody's idea of good policy. It was clearly recommended against by Macdonald. As somebody who has been around this debate for, as I say, 25 years, there's lots of talk and there has been talk, and sensible talk, about a restructuring in the distribution network. We don't need 335 distributors. Nobody but nobody thought we would see Hydro One going out and buying up Brampton Hydro.

Let me make another quick reference. The minister made a statement here last week about all is well. Maclean's magazine, in a first-rate article by Kimberly



Noble, Power Crunch: California, Alberta and Soon Ontario—I don't have time to read it all but let me tell you, you should go to Maclean's magazine, April 23, 2001. As far as I can tell, it's a very good article. It involves one of my constituents, Mike Dupuis up at Galleta. I've got to tell you, particularly for pro-small-business Conservatives to read this would, I hope, make your blood boil, because what is being advertised is not what is happening, and ever has it been thus.

This is why I do not accept the resolution standing in the name of the member from Kenora. I don't believe any government is going to be able to manage a state monopoly charged with all of the functions that attach to the electricity business in a modern society. To me, the resolution before us today goes back to the problem—is not really the solution—though I accept some of the criticism that the member has made.

I've been there. I know what I was like as a busy cabinet minister and what was not happening at Hydro that probably should have been happening. My colleague Mrs McLeod actually served as a Minister of Energy in our government. But it's been the story of cabinet-legislative-Hydro relationships since almost the beginning.

Let me come back to summarize where I think we should go. I start with the comment—again, on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus—electricity is a vital commodity that we absolutely have to have and that we cannot store. People who talk about electricity as a commodity like the rest are fools, and the test for that is simply this: what do you do in the middle of a Canadian winter if you don't have it? I can live without lumber, I can live without a lot of things, but we cannot live without electricity, and we can't store it. We absolutely have to have it, and that gives that commodity a remarkable political power. Nonetheless, that power does not need to justify some of the excesses that have got us into this problem.

There are vital public interests that the government of Ontario must recognize, and they are public interests. I have deep concern that one of the drivers of the Harris government policy here is their interest in accommodating special interests on Bay Street to the peril of people living on Main Street. From the beginning of this business, there were always powerful commercial interests wanting to get their hands on it. That's in fact the great fear that made Beck such a powerful business lobbyist.

We had better be about the public interest. Yes, I believe there should be a competitive marketplace for the generation of electricity. We believe, as Liberals, that that marketplace should be rigorously regulated by a public regulator, where the government of the day sets clear the objectives, including such things as, "There shall be a renewable power standard," and not leaving it up to somebody. That's a public policy. I think 20 states of the American union have said before their market opens, "You shall have a certain minimum amount of green power or renewable power available in a very short period of time."

There must be rigorous, even ruthless, public regulation of a marketplace in the generation sector where there are a number of generators, some big, some small, some public, some municipal and, yes, some private. In my view, I agree with Macdonald, it is getting that competition in generation that I think will give us the innovation, will support flexibility and new technology, and just might, under the aegis of a strong regulator, give us a better sense of true price.

1650

Today, for example, there was discussion about Beck No 3. I'm personally very interested in Beck No 3. But do you know what? Beck No 3 is going to sit on the shelf because behind closed doors the mandarins at PowerGen are probably going to be doing things on the nuclear side which may in the end be sensible, but who will know?

I'd like there to be a mechanism so that the true cost of bringing back some of the ailing nuclear capacity could be fairly measured against the cost of bringing Beck No 3, with approximately 500 megawatts, as I understand it, of renewable hydroelectric power into the marketplace.

But I can tell you that under a state monopoly system in generation, that's not going to happen. So my colleagues believe in a vital public interest that must be ruthlessly regulated by a public regulator, that the core policy has to be, as Macdonald suggested, a competitive marketplace in generation.

By the way, make no mistake about it, I say to the House that the biggest part of our generating asset base is the nuclear power division and you are never going to sell those assets. Maybe you are going to lease them, but you'll never sell them. One of the reasons you're not going to sell them is that the federal regulator has basically told us that never, never will Her Majesty be absolved of perpetual title for those properties, for reasons you can all imagine.

I support the Bruce deal, not because it was my first choice—I hope we got a good price. But where were we three or four years ago with Bruce? Huge sunk assets, all kinds of trouble. I think we have to look, as difficult as it is, and if we can do it economically and safely, then we should do that.

The other thing this marketplace contemplates is that the consumer is going to have some choice. But to have choice and to exercise that choice, the consumer needs information. You know, we're all getting this in our mailboxes this week. I don't know what it costs. This, to be polite, is not my idea of a good use of public resources in educating the public.

I will stand in my place today and say, however, that there is a place for the government of Ontario to educate the consumers of Ontario about the intricacies of this electricity marketplace, because there are people out there now, from Pembroke to Petrolia, from Timmins to Toronto, scamming innocent people who have no idea what they're signing. The government has done a poor job of protecting individuals and families against this kind of behaviour. And let me tell you, those chickens

are going to come home to roost in about 18 months, when people find out what they have signed.

I think there's an important place for consumer education, and the government has an obligation, on its own behalf and perhaps through the energy board, to make sure that good, understandable materials are in the hands of people in communities like the Speaker's and mine so they can understand what this new business of electricity competition and choice is all about.

My final point would be that we must find a way to deal with these wretched conflicts of interest in which governments find themselves in this business. I no longer will take these promises on faith. Others might; I won't. I think Edmund Burke gives me good advice. I owe my constituents, and I hope I owe this House, my mature judgment. If you don't believe me, read Nelles, read Freeman, two very good books that talk, chapter and verse, about good intentions that were never carried forward.

The great Beck plan for Hydro—Adam Beck's notion was that there would be public power without public accountability. He said he wasn't going to run a public enterprise like that old intercolonial railway. And do you know what? He succeeded, because he was dealing with a commodity that was essential and a technology that was complicated and a financial world that was substantial. How do Conway and Beaubien, out of the bush and off the farms of Renfrew and Lambton, seriously understand that, particularly as it gets more complicated and the numbers get bigger?

This Legislature owes it to the people of Ontario and the public trust to establish a select committee that will have a clear mandate and a responsible mandate to oversee behaviours today that are completely at variance with stated government policy and that are going to exacerbate, not improve, this electricity question. I hope and I pray that before this spring session is over we can do that. That is the kind of constructive resolution I would like.

Because I see in the resolution a remedy that Mr Hampton is offering to take us back to the trouble that got us here now, I reluctantly cannot support his recommendation, although I appreciate his frustration about the situation in which we now find ourselves.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Of course I'm pleased to participate in this debate today. I think it's an important debate and one that I hope more and more Ontarians become engaged in, because at the heart of the debate is whether we're going to have a system of reliable power for consumers and for industry in this province or whether we are not. Clearly, we believe that the road the government is taking us down, which is a road that California and Alberta have already gone down, is not the direction we want to go in.

This Minister of Energy, when we were dealing with Bill 35, was very clear to point to California as the option that this government wanted to implement in this province. He was very clear to speak in, oh, so glowing terms and details about California and how deregulated

power in Ontario would bring us the same benefits as they were seeing in California. Well, we've seen those benefits, haven't we? What benefits they are: brownouts, blackouts, huge energy prices, people not having a source of power they can rely on, industry in that state not having a source of power they can rely on. Those are some benefits. I don't think I want to go there.

Not only did the minister in, oh, so glowing terms talk about California when we dealt with Bill 35; he talked about Alberta too, and how we were going to have lower prices when we had more competition. Frankly, he guaranteed that. I sat at more than one meeting when the committee was dealing with this where the government members made it absolutely clear that Ontarians would probably have stable prices at first and then see a drop in electricity prices—a drop, a reduction, cheaper electricity prices.

What do we have today? My goodness, we just had this government announce that we're going to be seeing an 8% rate hike increase right now. That's not stability. That's not a lower price. We are experiencing right now an 8% increase in electricity prices, and that's before we even get into the deregulated market. Of course it should be argued that that's in an attempt to get us there so that the prices will already be jacked up when the corporate friends of this government, who want to buy the assets that we have built and paid for in this province, enter the market, so that those prices can be, oh, so high already and then they can jack them up even more when they sell into the US market. Anyone who looks at this, anyone who's looked at what's happened with natural gas, will know that's the market the people who buy up our assets are going to want to sell to. That's the market they want to sell to because that's the market where the highest prices are. Anyone who is going to buy up one of the assets that Ontarians built and paid for is going to want to get a return on that purchase, and they're going to get that return through trying to get the highest prices they can for the commodity they have just bought and paid for. Those highest prices are in New York and Boston and other major American centres.

The position that we are in as a party is to say very clearly to Ontarians that that's not the direction we should be going in, because that direction puts Ontario business and consumers at risk. It's very clear. We've got two other jurisdictions to prove that.

We're saying very clearly that there is another choice, and the choice is this: we should set up a new system of accountable public power in Ontario, and our alternative is public power.

**1700**

I disagree fundamentally with my colleagues from the Liberals who have the same position as our Tory friends, which is going to take us down the road of Alberta and California. I disagree fundamentally that it was the public system under us that caused the problems we are in, because I firmly believe we can run a public system where there is incredible accountability. Our proposal is that we have public ownership, but that unlike the pre-



vious public system, we ensure that it's the Ontario Energy Board that is given the power to set rates and approve or veto major supply projects, and that they should do that after full public hearings with intervenor funding. That will bring accountability to the system.

If we need more power, then the first priority will go to projects that are conservation, that will reduce demand. If we need new supply after that, the priority will go to plants that meet tough standards on rates and environmental performance. And all new applications to set up generation would have to have a component of at least 15% green power: technologies like solar, wind and small hydroelectric projects.

We believe fundamentally in public power, because our public power system served us well for well over 100 years to provide safe, reliable power at a price we could afford, at a price consumers and businesses could afford in this province. That's where we need to be again. That's where we need to go, not down the road of California and Alberta.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** It's very worthwhile to have this issue debated in a public forum, and we'll tell you why right at the outset. In our estimation, it is absolutely essential that we move to an open market. The minister has already detailed that and it's going to happen in May 2002.

Why is Ontario fully committed to having its electricity market open at that time? We want to ensure that we have more jobs, enhanced investment and more economic growth in this province. I fully support the opening of the hydroelectricity system in Ontario because it's going to lead to greater consumer choice, greater opportunities for growth in the private sector, a greater number of jobs, and above all, it's going to deal on a competitive basis with the pricing of electricity for consumers. That's what the fundamental objective of this whole exercise is. That's the fundamental rationale for the Electricity Competition Act being introduced and passed in 1998.

The parties opposite, especially the members of the third party, when you read the resolution, clearly indicate that they pine for the old days, that having a closed system will protect Ontario's interests. When you look at what is going on in North America, let alone the rest of the world, you are beginning to see the opening of competition. It's happening in different shapes and forms, but you don't see a retreat except in one place, California. You see that retreat because of a number of fundamental flaws that came about in the opening of their market.

This is not an issue of deregulation. It's an issue of opening a market with appropriate regulation. In the old arrangement, the old Ontario Hydro evolved from what Adam Beck saw in his early days, and you had by the 1970s and 1980s a huge powerful monopoly. How do we know that? On the ground, as a former hydro commissioner of the former Etobicoke Hydro Commission, we could see the major flaws, the deficiencies in the old system to which they advocate a return. We were on the front lines as an electricity retailer.

What happened, folks, was that budgets were created and increases were allowed essentially by the monopoly. You had ranges and ratios either for residential, commercial or industrial when they set their hydro rates.

Guess what, folks? At that time, everybody thought the cost of hydro was reasonable. It was affordable. People were reasonably happy. But when you looked behind the scenes you could see that when you have a huge public monopoly, over time it's inevitable that you are going to end up having inefficiencies. You're going to have an environment that encourages an absence of incentives. That was exactly the frame of operations in that electricity retailer, as in so many others.

Yes, there were some moves toward putting monies into recapitalization, into renewal of infrastructure, into orderly maintenance of lines, because you wanted to ensure reliability of power at a reasonable, affordable cost, but nobody really knew in those days what constituted a reasonable, affordable cost because there was hardly any situation where you had price comparators.

With that history, you had a situation where you had a monopoly, very little competition except the odd situation of cogeneration, and you ended up with a situation that became unacceptable. Why? Because we ended up with a \$38-billion deficit. It's \$38 billion and growing. That's the problem with this whole proposition that we revert back to the old arrangement, because when we look around the world, when we look at Ontario compared to the United States situation, particularly Pennsylvania, there are very similar themes and circumstances.

As you realize, we have not opened the market at this point, until we—when we say “we,” we mean the independent electricity operator—have determined that we will have a sufficient supply of power at competitive pricing. Not only that, we'll have pricing the consumer has some choice in. Under the old arrangement, the consumer had no choice. You had one choice: Ontario Hydro through the municipal electric unit or the public utilities or whatever the particular designation was for a community. There wasn't any opportunity to buy from any other source.

When you look at the overall situation, it's much more effective and honest to portray our circumstances at the outset with Pennsylvania, with the United Kingdom, with certain states in Australia. Why? Because in those situations, as much as there is a perpetual and adamant denial from members of the third party, we have price decreases. Why do we have that? Because we now have competition in these jurisdictions and when you have competition, particularly at the residential rate, you get lower rates. I know those folks across the way want to continue to point out that we're California, when in point of fact it sounds like a doctor who diagnoses you with the flu, but when you go back you end up with a completely different diagnosis. It's a misdiagnosis of the circumstances. It's a misdiagnosis of what is going on in Ontario. It is patently dishonest, inappropriately ineffectual to be making this flawed comparison over and over again, because that's not the situation.

If you want to talk about the fundamentals here, the fundamental is that you have to have an adequate supply, and an adequate supply is that the independent electricity operator notes and knows that we have an arrangement where everybody has power of whatever sort, which leads to another significant benefit.

1710

By opening up the market, you start to encourage new investment. When we look at what is happening in this province, you can see the emergence of different types of generators, whether it be wind, gas turbine or biomass. Those are forms of green energy, and you're going to see an increasingly significant number of generators taking that format of generating power. That is a key, significant benefit in this whole situation.

When we refer to the other jurisdictions like the United Kingdom, it is estimated that consumers are saving about \$1.7 billion annually, or places like Australia, where electricity market reforms have resulted in an average price decline of nearly 24%. Those are the success stories. That is the path we expect our competitive market will take by the end of next year.

There isn't any doubt in my mind that Ontario has a healthy, effective supply-demand balance, whereas California and Alberta have both struggled to open up their markets in a period of rapidly growing demand. That's the real question here that's at debate, not how you deliver the product, the commodity; it is how you get the prices down.

We want to show, in point of fact, when you look at the American situation, that in the grid system of the mountain states—and I hope, Speaker, you pay particular attention to this. In the state of Idaho, which is still—you use this term “deregulation” or “regulated.” This is an American state that is still regulated. One of their power companies came there and asked for a 34% increase. According to their mantra, this should not be happening. If you talk about the public versus the private delivery of electric power in North America, there should be a significant decrease there, but it is not occurring. Why? Because you have the traditional classic demand-and-supply equation, something that the folks across the way need to get a grasp of. That is the fundamental issue, not how you deliver the stuff, although we still want to have an effective regulated market in terms of consumer protection, and we have that through the Ontario Energy Board.

In the old Hydro arrangement prior to 1998, we certainly did not have Ontario Hydro having to make its submissions to the OEB any more than once that I can recall. They simply were the Ontario Energy Board to a great extent. Consumer protection? Primarily through marketing communications. When you have a monopoly, you make the price decisions, and if the consumer wants to take it—you have to if you're an industry, a manufacturer or a hospital.

I think folks across the way need to look at their proposition. The world is changing, folks. It is time to get on the train. This proposition would take us back in time, back to an Ontario where they want to put up high walls.

It is like the folks who were at the Summit of the Americas, I guess. If we could only protect ourselves with a huge wall and not have a supply grid, no problem like that, then Ontario would be safe. But we are in a world, realistically, where we do trade. Most of our jobs, about four in five, come from international trade.

The final comment that I would like to make today, that has been made by the leader of the third party so many times, is a reminder of what the reality was between 1991 and 1995 regarding this issue. He has called in his questions and has certainly implied in his resolution that we should not be shipping any excess power. When we talk about excess power, that would be determined by what would be available to be sold into the American market, primarily New York state, if there were an excess supply. That would be determined by the IMO. The reality is, if you look back at the recent history on this issue, between 1991 and 1995, guess what? In 1991, Ontario Hydro sold \$62 million worth, exported; in 1992, \$56 million; in 1993, \$128 million; in 1994—this one really caught my eye—\$349 million; in 1995, \$233 million. Why did that occur? Because we had excess supply to our needs for all our customers.

**Interjection:** What are we supposed to do with the excess?

**Mr Hastings:** I guess the leader of the third party would create—I don't know how you would prevent it. The electrons would flow one way, and I guess you'd have a superman to stop them when they got into a grid that involves New York state. The proposition is so ludicrous that it's impossible to think through the implications.

You would think the leader of the third party would be in favour of jobs, in favour of investment, in favour of economic growth, because we need these things for our vital public services. But, no, this proposition, this resolution, takes us back in time. It wants to re-regulate everything. It doesn't really encourage the access and generation and investment in new forms of energy—biomass, wind, solar, what have you. Those are the things we need. That is the fundamental rationale for moving to an open market in an appropriately orderly way.

That's fundamentally different as well from the jurisdictions of California and Alberta. If you want to make a true comparison, make it to some of the other American states. One of the most clearly similar cases is Pennsylvania. Look at the history there. That's what I encourage viewers to do today. Go and talk to your friends and neighbours in that state and get first-hand experience of what has happened to consumer pricing at the retail residential rate. Why did it occur? Because they made sure at the outset that they had an adequate supply in excess of the state's needs, the same as what you're going to see here. To hear the stuff from the other side, where you have an alternative that is unworkable, unjustifiable, old-style thinking, then this is the way you'd want to proceed.

I don't want to return to the old days of the old monopolistic practices of Ontario Hydro. Bless the



people who worked in that situation; they provided good power. But the times have changed. We are in the 21st century and we're not going to revert to an old, 18th-century or earlier style, where the state dominates. So I reject categorically the propositions and wishful sentiments in this resolution. I guess we'll continue to have speakers as the flow goes.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Thank you very much, Mr Silly—Mr Speaker. Sorry, Mr Speaker, in my mind I was thinking the member for Etobicoke North must be reading the same book as Mike Harris—the book is called Mr Silly. His entire discourse, quite frankly, was so out of touch that it certainly has to be in the realm of possibility that he's been reading that favourite book of Mike Harris called Mr Silly.

The other thing I want to say to the member from Etobicoke, before I get to my comments, is that for him to argue that our leader, Howard Hampton, and the NDP oppose the—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** Why? You don't like being called "silly"?  
1720

**Mr Hastings:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: To the member for Timiskaming-James Bay, I would just like to say that I am a library user and have been the chairman of the library board in Etobicoke. Please don't insult us, that we don't know—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much. Member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Bisson:** Mr Speaker, first of all, it's Timmins-James Bay and I know there is more than one copy of Mr Silly in his library.

His comment that the NDP opposes the transmission of power into the United States is utterly stupid, it's silly. When we were the government and there was excess power being generated by Ontario Hydro, we facilitated and encouraged the sale of excess power into the United States because it meant revenue for Ontario Hydro. It's such a silly argument.

For him to argue that all of a sudden deregulation, where it has been put in place, has worked to lower prices flies in the face of reality. Again, I think he read Mr Silly. What you see in California, in New York state, in New Hampshire, in Alberta and a whole bunch of other jurisdictions where they've gone down this road is that it has not led to lower hydro prices. In fact, it's been the complete opposite. So I start off by saying that.

I want to bring to the record something I think is important in this debate, and that is what this decision by the government means when it comes to the industrial users of Ontario. All of us represent ridings where there are large industrial users, or most of us do across this province. We have companies like Falconbridge in my riding and in the riding of the member for Nickel Belt, companies like Tembec, there are the Big Three auto makers—GM, Chrysler etc—all of which use a fair amount of power. Electricity is a major part of their doing business.

If this were such a great idea, all the CEOs across Ontario would be running to the Tory fundraisers and running to the mikes in front of the boards of trade and using every opportunity they could to stand up and talk about how good deregulation is for their companies. What I've been finding as I've been going around northern Ontario talking to the CEOs of companies the likes of Abitibi-Consolidated, people at Tembec, Columbia Forest Products, Falconbridge, Dome Mines and a whole bunch of other operators, is they are nervous as hell about what you guys are doing when it comes to the viability of their operations. They recognize as business people that hydro is a cost of doing business, and that if you deregulate the market as you propose, there is by way of inference from everything else we've seen up to now—and my colleagues will talk about this in more detail—an increase in hydro costs. We know that in California it has more than doubled; the same thing in Alberta. It's happened across the American eastern seaboard. Where they've deregulated the market, hydro prices have in some cases gone up by more than 100%. There are some jurisdictions where they've gone up quite a bit more than that.

I've had the opportunity to say to a lot of the companies, "What does this mean to your bottom line?" As they're writing back to us, they're saying, "There's a real concern here." The competitive advantages Ontario has as an economy are, first of all, the availability of a constant supply of hydro and, number two, an inexpensive, at-cost source of hydro, as bought by Ontario Hydro. That's one of the things that's made our economy competitive.

I just want to read for the record comments made by the CEO of Falconbridge, not exactly somebody who would come to an NDP fundraiser, I think we can all agree, probably a Liberal or a Conservative, I would think, somebody who is more closely associated with the pro side of the argument for deregulation and privatization. The CEO "told analysts during a conference call yesterday that the 'backwards' move will do significant damage to the Ontario mining industry." That's what the CEO of Falconbridge had to say about your backwards move to privatize and deregulate the Ontario Hydro corporation. "I think the province should try to make power available at reasonable prices because that's going to have a very positive impact on the future mining developments in the province," said the CEO of this company. "I hope we can do something to make them change their mind, but we have nothing on the table today." They're talking about your willingness to change your mind on what is a very dangerous idea. Higher energy bills will mean higher costs for Falconbridge's operations in Sudbury and Timmins. "That's a pretty significant hit," says the CEO. "We're going to have to work on the political side," to change the mind of the government. So even your own people don't agree.

I say, in the 30 seconds I have left, if for anything, please change your mind on this, because to our employers in our part of the province, as in yours, it means a

significant increase in the cost of doing business. If that happens, it's going to lead to further job losses in Ontario, something we've started to see this spring for the first time in about four or five years.

We think it's a dumb idea. We think it should be a regulated market. We think it should be under public control. I agree with the CEO of Falconbridge, who said, "This is a backward move."

**Mr Galt:** Thank you for being able to join in the debate. I look at the resolution put forward by the leader of the third party, and it's really a resolution of going back. It's looking in the rear view mirror and looking at what has been happening before.

I can understand why they might bring forward a resolution like this, with the kind of things that happened to the cost of electricity from 1985 to 1995. I well remember talking to a representative from the Ford Motor Co. He talked about making cars in some 17 regions in North America, and he pointed out that in 1985 the cheapest electricity to build Ford cars was right here in Ontario. By 1995 it had become the 13th most expensive out of 17. I can understand why they're trying to capitalize on this particular issue, because there is a lot of emotion about it, but it really relates back to those horrendous increases. What was it, 35% or so during the term that the NDP was in government?

This debate today is about an open market; it's not about deregulation. As a matter of fact, I would suggest there is probably a lot more regulation going in than going out. This debate is not about public versus private. This debate is about monopoly versus competition, and competition is indeed healthy.

Listening to the members from the third party talking about being friends of business, I really don't quite understand where the member for Timmins-James Bay was coming from. They just don't seem to have any empathy with that business sector.

I know when we were on the road on hearings for the Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal, over and over again the people who came before that task force in the province of Ontario, some 14 communities, were saying, "Infrastructure is so important, the price of electricity is so important." At the rate Ontario Hydro was going with the cost of electricity, certainly that was not sustainable for small industry in small-town Ontario.

By moving in the direction that we're moving, it's going to provide tremendous opportunities in small-town Ontario, in rural Ontario. We were told in those hearings that they want the ability to generate their own power. There are so many opportunities out there where they can generate their own power and stabilize the cost for their businesses, whether they use natural gas, a cleaner form of production of electricity, or whether they go to true green power, whether it's solar or wind or biomass.

Something the third party brought in was that they outlawed the ability to construct a waste-to-energy incinerator. They would rather put all that resource into the ground. They didn't want to take responsibility for it and have a properly equipped incinerator that could take that

resource and convert it to energy. I am pleased that on January 1, 1996, we came out with the proper regulations that would oversee waste-to-energy incineration. The reason we haven't moved ahead is because of Ontario Hydro being the big block, for them to sell into the grid, it was cost-prohibitive for them to move ahead.

I did agree with one of the comments that the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke made. He commented that on the production of electricity, there was always a drawback, regardless of the one that you choose. Even with a true green power, there is visual pollution. With windmills, in a field with wind power, with big solar panels, with a biomass, there are certainly even drawbacks with those. But at least with the direction we're going, you will have a choice. You'll be able to choose a source. If you want true green power and you're willing to pay a few cents more per kilowatt hour, you'll have that opportunity, that the electricity you use comes from a clean source.

I see that moving to competition with the direction that this government is going is indeed going to be good for rural business.

**1730**

I think of this whole thing of monopoly versus competition, and that's really what the whole debate should be about. What if in Ontario or in Canada we only had one airline? What would it be like if we had one airline and we could only depend on that airline to go anywhere in the world, if there was only one timetable? They would sort of say to you, "It's either our way or the highway." If it was only Air Canada or, such as in Russia, it was the Soviet airline Aeroflot, just imagine where we would be. That's the kind of thing that we've been with Ontario Hydro.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Galt:** They're squawking in the third party about Aeroflot. That's exactly what they would like to have to fly them around the country.

I don't understand why the opposition is so concerned about moving to competition and bringing some health into the electricity market.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Timmins-James Bay will come to order.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm sorry, Speaker. You got me.

**Mr Galt:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

There's a great advantage in moving out to competition, with the greater efficiency and having more bang for the buck. Competition rewards innovation, and that's so important in developing power in the future. Monopoly tends to stifle competition, and competition in service delivery favours survival of the helpful. No one would characterize the old Ontario Hydro as helpful. Competition boosts the pride and morale of employees.

I'd just like to spend a few minutes on the significant differences that we're seeing between California versus Ontario. In California, some 53% of the production comes from natural gas; in Ontario, 6%. How much has natural gas gone up in recent months? In California, the



supply is minimal and limited in the future; in Ontario there's a surplus of supply and there are many more coming on, both our nuclear plants as well as many private companies coming on.

The sale is different here as well. We're prepared to go to bilateral contracts. In California, it has been the spot market and therefore tremendous fluctuation from day to day.

They seem to want to zero in on where there's been a problem, such as in California. The parliamentary assistant made reference to Pennsylvania, and certainly competition has worked very well in Pennsylvania, with some US\$3-billion savings, and by 2004 there will be some 36,000 net new jobs created. It would appear that the third party is anti-new jobs. You would think they would be very much for them, particularly when probably a fair number of those jobs would be unionized jobs. I don't know why they would be opposed to that.

In the United Kingdom, the Auditor General reports there has been a savings of some £750 million per year. That would translate to roughly C\$1.7 billion per year in the United Kingdom. In Australia, costs dropped by some 24%, an equivalent of an annual GDP increase in that country of 1.25%. So indeed there have been some tremendous advantages.

I've never said that in Ontario the price was going to go down, but certainly if we didn't do something about what was happening from 1985 to 1995, we were on a trail sort of spiralling into nowhere. It was like a suicidal situation that we were in. Certainly when we came to office we talked about a \$33-billion debt. We paid off something like \$3 billion, and now I find out that it's \$38 billion. There's something drastically wrong with what's been going on, and I guess there's been more books found and more debt found that the third party managed to conceal quite well once upon a time. But lo and behold, when it's all put together it's at \$38 billion, and I heard the parliamentary assistant make reference to "and climbing." So certainly something very drastic had to be done.

I look forward to an open market and competition in the electricity market.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** First of all, let me say in response that in my few minutes I want to talk about the environment and the realities here, but I want to say that when members from the Tory caucus say it was under the NDP and Liberals before us that prices kept skyrocketing, I want to remind the members that it was the NDP that finally brought this stuff under control. It was because of the decision a Tory government made way back on Darlington, which came on stream finally in 1992, that we had warned the Tories and the Liberals after them it was unnecessary and was going to cause a huge debt, but it was this party that brought rates under control and froze them. Let's set the record straight on that. It's now, under this government, that they're going up and up, and they keep saying deregulation instead of bringing them down.

Burning garbage has nothing to do with this debate, but I want to say to the member that the reason why the NDP still opposes that is it creates more air pollution. The better the pollution abatement equipment, the more hazardous waste that's generated that has to go into the ground. We'll have that debate another time.

What I want to say now is what the Premier said today about environmentalists, if I can find it here. He said, "I know there are some environmentalists that are opposed to every form energy, I suppose, including some that would say a windmill heats up the air and that contributes to global warming." Then he goes on to say, "It looks like nuclear energy is appearing more and more to be the green energy of choice." Let's face it: when these guys stand up and talk about and use environmentalists as a good excuse for why they're moving in this direction, why they're moving toward deregulation—they say, "We'll bring on more green power. We'll bring on more wind, solar, biomass."

Let me remind the government of a press release put out by a number of environmental groups giving the government a failing grade. They say that, "The Ontario government has broken its promise to protect the environment as the provincial electricity sector is open to competition and are seeking a review ... under the Environmental Bill of Rights." They say, "When the government proposed to restructure the electricity market it promised true competition among fuels on price and a move toward green power generation. Instead of leveling the playing field, the government has subsidized dirty and risky generation, disavowed responsibility for consumer protection and is walking away from its environmental promises too."

That is the reality of what's going on out there. Now we have the United States cozying up to the Liberal Prime Minister of Canada and Mike Harris. What are they talking about? Are they talking about green power, wind power, solar? They're talking about building more nuclear plants and we don't know where to bury the waste we already have. Radioactive nuclear waste is a huge problem and the Liberals in Ottawa are now talking about burying it in the Canadian Shield. We're talking about nuclear plants. That's what's going on here. You're trying to dupe environmentalists and other people who want to bring in clean power here, but they're on to you. That's not what this is all about. It's more and more the direction you're moving in, and we see the writing clearly on the wall now. It's more coal-powered plants, more nuclear plants. These things are bad for the environment. The government is even trying to blame some massive rate increases on trying to clean up the coal-powered generators. In fact, all you've done so far is announce that you're going to convert Lakeview, and that was after tremendous pressure from the NDP and others out there.

You haven't even said anything about Nanticoke, which is the biggest coal-fired plant in Ontario, creating the most pollution. Things are getting worse under your government, and this deregulation has nothing to do—stop playing that game with the environmentalists and the

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		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
		Vaughan-King-Aurora	Vacant

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 2 mai 2001

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

**Loi de 2001 sur le gel du prix  
de certains produits pétroliers,**  
projet de loi 32, *M. Bartolucci*  
Adoptée ..... 364

**Loi de 2001 modifiant  
le Code de la route  
(passagers à l'extérieur d'un  
véhicule),** projet de loi 33,  
*M. Galt*  
Adoptée ..... 364

**Loi de 2001 modifiant  
la Loi sur la santé  
et la sécurité au travail,**  
projet de loi 34, *M. Agostino*  
Adoptée ..... 364

**Loi de 2001 sur le Jour  
du patrimoine irlandais,**  
projet de loi 35, *M. O'Toole*  
Adoptée ..... 364

**Loi de 2001 concernant  
la vérité sur Ipserwash,**  
projet de loi 36, *M. Phillips*  
Adoptée ..... 365

# CONTENTS

Wednesday 2 May 2001

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Dennis Redman</b>	
Mr Peters .....	361
<b>Decorum in chamber</b>	
Mr O'Toole .....	361
<b>Waterfowl hunting</b>	
Mr Parsons .....	361
<b>Road safety</b>	
Mr Galt .....	362
<b>Domestic violence courts</b>	
Mr Gravelle .....	362
<b>South Asian Heritage Month</b>	
Mr Gill .....	362
<b>School closures</b>	
Mr Duncan .....	362
<b>Rail service</b>	
Mr Bisson .....	363
<b>Heritage conservation</b>	
Mrs Molinari .....	363

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

<b>Standing committee on government agencies</b>	
The Speaker .....	363
Report deemed adopted .....	363

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Petroleum Products Price Freeze Act, 2001, Bill 32,</b>	
<i>Mr Bartolucci</i>	
Agreed to .....	364
Mr Bartolucci .....	364
<b>Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Outside Riders), 2001, Bill 33,</b>	
<i>Mr Galt</i>	
Agreed to .....	364
Mr Galt .....	364
<b>Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act, 2001, Bill 34,</b>	
<i>Mr Agostino</i>	
Agreed to .....	364
Mr Agostino .....	364
<b>Irish Heritage Day Act, 2001,</b>	
<i>Bill 35, Mr O'Toole</i>	
Agreed to .....	364
Mr O'Toole .....	364
<b>Truth About Ipperwash Act, 2001,</b>	
<i>Bill 36, Mr Phillips</i>	
Agreed to .....	365
Mr Phillips .....	365

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Environmental protection</b>	
Mrs Witmer .....	365
Mr Coburn .....	365
Mr Bradley .....	367
Ms Churley .....	368

<b>Living Legacy</b>	
Mr Snobelen .....	366
Mr Peters .....	367
Mr Hampton .....	368

## DEFERRED VOTES

<b>Throne speech debate</b>	
Agreed to .....	370

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>School extracurricular activities</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	370
Mrs Ecker .....	370
<b>Tuition fees</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	371
Mr Harris .....	371
<b>Competitive electricity market</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	372
Mr Harris .....	372
<b>Privatization of public services</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	373
Mr Harris .....	373
Ms Churley .....	373

<b>Air quality</b>	
Mr Bradley .....	373
Mrs Witmer .....	373
<b>Conestogo dam</b>	
Mr Arnott .....	374
Mr Snobelen .....	374

<b>Ipperwash Provincial Park</b>	
Mr Phillips .....	375
Mr Harris .....	375

<b>Road safety</b>	
Mr Galt .....	375
Mr Clark .....	375

<b>Education funding</b>	
Mr Marchese .....	375
Mr Harris .....	376

<b>Highway accident</b>	
Mr Bartolucci .....	376
Mr Turnbull .....	376

<b>Immigration and refugee policy</b>	
Mr Hastings .....	376
Mr Young .....	376

<b>Landfill</b>	
Mr Agostino .....	377
Mr Clement .....	377

<b>Tax revenues</b>	
Mr Tascona .....	377
Mr Harris .....	378

<b>Northern health travel grant</b>	
Mr Bisson .....	378
Mr Clement .....	378, 379
Mr Hampton .....	378

<b>Highway 407</b>	
Mr Hoy .....	379
Mr Clark .....	379

<b>Arts and cultural funding</b>	
Ms Mushinski .....	379
Mr Hudak .....	379

## PETITIONS

<b>Northern health travel grant</b>	
Mr Gravelle .....	380
<b>Child care</b>	
Ms Martel .....	380, 382
<b>Doctor shortage</b>	
Mr Martiniuk .....	380
<b>Services for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Ms Di Cocco .....	381
<b>Karla Homolka</b>	
Mr Hastings .....	381
<b>Veterinary services</b>	
Mrs Dombrowsky .....	381
<b>Mandatory influenza vaccination</b>	
Mr Tascona .....	381
<b>Government cuts</b>	
Mr Gerretsen .....	382
<b>Horse riding safety</b>	
Mrs Munro .....	382
<b>Social audit</b>	
Mr Gravelle .....	382
<b>Diabetes treatment</b>	
Ms Mushinski .....	383

## OPPOSITION DAY

<b>Competitive electricity market</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	383
Mr Conway .....	385
Ms Martel .....	390
Mr Hastings .....	391
Mr Bisson .....	393
Mr Galt .....	394
Ms Churley .....	395
Mr O'Toole .....	396
Negated .....	397

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Pat Carey</b>	
Mr Turnbull .....	368
Mr Levac .....	369
Mr Kormos .....	369

Continued overleaf





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of Ontario**

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
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Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

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(Hansard)**

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**Thursday 3 May 2001**

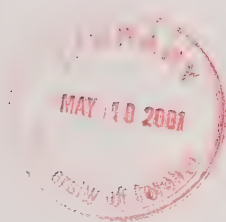
**Jeudi 3 mai 2001**

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Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 mai 2001

*The House met at 1000.  
Prayers.*

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### HORSE RIDING SAFETY ACT, 2001 LOI DE 2001 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES CAVALIERS

Mrs Molinari moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act to increase the safety of equestrian riders / Projet de loi 12, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des cavaliers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Pursuant to standing order 96, the member for Thornhill has 10 minutes to make her presentation.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** I would ask for unanimous consent to display props on my desk.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? No, there is not.

**Mrs Molinari:** I would like to ask the honourable members to picture in their minds a young girl, a beautiful, active, precocious 10-year-old. It is early April. Her 10th birthday was only the week before. The little girl is all excited because the next morning she is going to go horseback riding at a trail ranch. She leaves a note on her dresser to remind herself that she needs to wear old clothes. She is going riding and she wants to be prepared.

By the time the note is found she is already dead. She fell from her horse and her foot got stuck in the stirrup. As the horse continued to move, she struck her head on a rock, which killed her.

Now imagine the girl's parents. They sent a very excited little girl off with her friends that day in April. Never did they think that a day of horseback riding might end so tragically. Imagine those grief-stricken parents discovering that their daughter's death was not the first of its kind. Imagine them finding coroners' reports on the deaths of three young people dating back as far as 1977, all of which stated that provincial legislation should be introduced to ensure safety equipment is worn by those riding horses. Imagine the parents realizing that the tragic accident could have been avoided if their daughter had been made to wear a helmet and boots, and if her horse had been given tack fitted with detachable or hooded stirrups.

Unfortunately, this scenario really happened. The little girl's name was Elizabeth Hader and, but for a helmet

and boots, she might be alive today. It is in Elizabeth's memory that I present this bill: in her memory and in the memory of countless other young people who have been critically injured or killed in horseback riding accidents in Ontario.

Elizabeth's parents, Paul and Laurie Hader of Aurora, are here today, as is Phyllis Morris, the former Aurora town councillor who drafted the original horseback riding safety bylaw which inspired this bill. I would like to welcome them to the debate.

As I ask you to support Bill 12, I pose these questions: Would you let your child play hockey without proper equipment? Would you let your child ride a bicycle on a busy street without a helmet? Would you let your child do anything dangerous without first being protected? Why should horseback riding be any different?

Horseback riding is a risk sport. It is a fun leisure activity involving beautiful, spirited animals but it is a risk sport. As a risk sport, certain minimum safety standards must be put in place. As more and more Ontarians try horseback riding, the need for such safety standards becomes increasingly clear. Too many Ontarians, many of them children, have died or have been injured in riding accidents. Their injuries might well have been prevented if they had been provided with a certified riding helmet and proper footwear. Equestrian accidents occur not only through carelessness or lack of experience, but can happen to the most experienced riders. Horseback riding is an inherently risky sport. The dangers can never be completely eliminated, but proper safety precautions can drastically reduce the chances of serious and possibly fatal injury.

The purpose of Bill 12 is to increase the safety of horseback riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used. Riding establishments would be required to provide proper helmet and footwear to riders if they do not have their own. The legislation allows for a reasonable rental fee to be charged. If a young person does not wear a helmet, they will not ride. The bill also amends the Highway Traffic Act to increase the safety of riders who use Ontario's roadways.

Why does Ontario need to regulate the horse riding industry? Currently, without standard laws that insist on the wearing of helmets and boots or the provision of hooded breakaway stirrups for those under 18, it is left entirely up to the individual commercial operators to determine what level of safety to offer the riders. In the case of the vast majority of riding establishment operators, this is not a concern. For those few operators who

put profit above protection, this legislation will ensure that the safety of the rider is always first.

The industry itself has asked for safety standards. The support of the Ontario Equestrian Federation and the Association of Riding Establishments of Ontario is behind this bill. They themselves have been pushing for riding establishments to adopt minimum safety standards. Currently, however, the industry admits it is too fragmented to regulate itself and there is no legislation in Ontario which presently deals with this issue.

I'd like to quote the Ontario Equestrian Federation and the Association of Riding Establishments. The OEF is an umbrella organization representing all equestrian sport, with the exception of the racing industry in Ontario. The ARE promotes safety, animal welfare and education, and provides support to equine stable operators in Ontario. This is what they have to say: "Ms Molinari's proposal that appropriate footwear and a riding helmet be worn by those under the age of 18 years while riding a horse is commendable. Any and all efforts to ensure the safety of Ontario youth is a goal of the equine community; the support of the Legislative Assembly will help to ensure that the experience of riding a horse is a positive one for all."

When Phyllis Morris introduced her bylaw on equestrian safety in the town of Aurora, letters of support came pouring in. Each letter said the same thing, that people were shocked at the senseless deaths of young riders, that definitive action was obviously called for and that there was no reason not to wear helmets and boots when riding. Such simple pieces of equipment could save lives.

One letter read: "I was appalled to learn that children under the age of 18 are not required to wear a helmet when horseback riding. In addition, ranches are not responsible to provide safety stirrups when horseback riding. These two issues have serious repercussions for our children. I ask that you establish regulations to protect our children. Unless regulations are implemented, serious injury or death is inevitable. Please do something to change the regulations and protect life's greatest asset—our children."

1010

Another letter said: "A friend of mine named Elizabeth Hader died because she did not have a helmet on or the right stirrups on the horse. Please don't let another friend of mine die."

A third letter read: "I have two children of my own. It is so hard for me to imagine going through what the parents of Elizabeth went through. God bless them. Please let's prevent this from ever happening again."

The issue of equestrian safety has been one that has haunted Ontario for decades. In 1977, 22-year-old Wayne Delaney was thrown from his horse and killed while riding at a ranch in west Toronto. One of the many recommendations of the coroner's jury was that "it be mandatory that operators of riding establishments do not permit horses to be ridden by persons not wearing footwear which does not have heels of sufficient design as to

prevent the slippage of a person's foot through a stirrup" and that "the operators of riding establishments maintain a supply of riding helmets so that these will be available to all riders on request."

A mere two years later, 13-year-old Wade Sciscenti fell off a horse and died of massive brain damage. The coroner's jury wrote: "We the jury feel that since helmets are required for motorcycling and skidooring it should be equally requested for horseback riding and therefore recommend that safety standards be set to have equestrian helmets approved by CSA standards, and that the wearing of approved equestrian helmets be made compulsory for all riding schools, stables, and horseback riding."

#### **The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I will indicate from the beginning that I intend to support this piece of legislation. I extend to the members of the family today my personal sympathy and, I know, the sympathy of all members of the Legislature. It is always extremely tragic when it is a youngster who passes away, that as a result of an accident, a youngster's life is lost. It is devastating for the family. Whenever we can take action that would protect young people who are vulnerable, in terms of providing greater safety for these youngsters, it is our role and responsibility to do so.

I know there is a philosophy out there among some people that government should be backing off, that government should have as little role as possible in the personal lives of individuals. There are people who will oppose the intervention of government even in bringing about safety for the citizens it represents. I recall that when seat belt legislation was first introduced, there were a number of people who resisted it and said it was not wise. Happily, many of those people changed their minds. But it is interesting that young people themselves often have a more cautious view than adults and are more careful in terms of taking actions to protect themselves.

An example would be this: I can recall getting into a van to get a ride from someone. I was only going to go a block, and of course we should put our seat belts on. Someone else was driving in this case and there were two children in the van, both of whom insisted that the van would not move until such time as I put my seat belt on. I wear my seat belt 99.99% of the time in my own vehicle. But it was refreshing and encouraging to see that here were children who were insisting that an adult in the car take the precaution—usually it is the opposite way—even for one block. Of course, those children were right. They had been taught that both by their parents and in the school system.

Here is a situation where young people are involved in riding horses, equestrian riders. These youngsters are excited by the opportunity to ride a horse, to be involved with horses. However, there is danger. As the member has mentioned in her initial remarks, horses aren't always rational. They are very large animals and an accident can happen. There is no guarantee that we can completely remove the chance of that accident happening. Never-



theless, it is important that we take any action we can to protect the health and safety of the children. In this case it relates to people under 18 years old. Just to show a comparable example, I was talking to an individual who said that today he no longer allows his children to ski without having a helmet on. This individual talked about that from the point of view that it's very important; there have been accidents in skiing, so helmets were essential.

Children then insist that adults take the same action. We're seeing this with bicycles. Dianne Cunningham, who is the Minister of Colleges and Universities in this province, brought forth legislation dealing with helmets for people who are riding bicycles. If you had said, when I was a youngster just a few years ago, that I should be wearing a helmet while riding a bicycle, most people in those days would have laughed at it. You would have been called names; it would have been said that you weren't a tough person because you weren't prepared to ride a bicycle without a helmet. Well, look around today: children are wearing helmets. Look around today: adults are wearing helmets.

We went through this process with motorcycles, where there were people who strongly resisted helmets, and today there are people in our society who, as a result of accidents where they weren't wearing a helmet, have been incapacitated in many ways. So there's a general consensus now in our society that we take these steps. What is unfortunate for all of us is that very often what prompts the action, in terms of legislative or regulatory action, is a tragic accident. The only satisfaction that parents of members of a family or friends would have is that as a result of a tragedy that has happened to them personally, others may be spared that same experience.

So I certainly will be supporting this bill. There's an indication that riders under the age of 18 will be required—there's a requirement on the operators of riding establishments to ensure that riders use proper safety equipment, included properly fitted tack. The operators at establishments are also required to have proper safety equipment available for hire at reasonable rates.

It goes on to say that the bill also amends the Highway Traffic Act, that it is an offence for any rider under the age of 18 years to be mounted on a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment. Parents and guardians of riders under the age of 16 years are also guilty of an offence if they authorize or knowingly permit riders to contravene that restriction. It may not happen initially, but I think we'll find that people will become accustomed to the rules and regulations contained within this legislation and there wouldn't even be an argument within a few years about whether or not this was sensible.

I happen to be a person who believes that government does have a role in intervening, particularly when it's the safety of children involved. That is why I think you saw very strong support in the Legislative Assembly for Mrs Cunningham's bill that I mentioned, who herself had had an experience within her family that brought it even closer to her in terms of the need for legislation.

I hope the Red Tape Commission does not review this and decide that it's not necessary. One of my concerns

about the Red Tape Commission, headed by my former adjacent colleague Frank Sheehan and I think Mr Bob Wood, the member for London West, is that they are to look at all potential regulations and legislation, all that exists at the present time. I would hope that in their obsession with wanting to get the government out of everybody's lives, they would recognize the importance of this legislation and legislation of its kind, which is designed, first of all, to protect children in our society.

1020

I look in the public galleries today; there are children from various schools. They will not have an opportunity to live out their lives and enjoy all that life has to offer them if indeed they are the victims of an unfortunate accident, if we as adults, as members of the Legislature, did not take the appropriate action to try to prevent this from happening.

I should mention this; it is perhaps just a little bit off the topic. If you are talking about helmets, it would be nice if there were helmets that would also protect our children from the bad air that we're experiencing today in the province of Ontario. I only put that out there because I know the member, as all members would be, would be concerned about all things which impact children.

I can tell you that, as I see these children here, some are involved in horseback riding, some are riding bicycles, some are skiing and some are playing sports of other kinds that may be contact sports. We want to ensure that all of these children have the proper equipment.

I go back even to adults, Mr Speaker. You are a hockey fan. You've had some good teams from down your way in Stratford, Ingersoll, Moncton and a number of places such as those. You will recall that it was normal for youngsters and others to play hockey without helmets and without a face mask of any kind.

If you had said to junior hockey players a generation ago, "You're going to have to wear not only a helmet, but you're going to have to wear a mask of some kind to protect your face and perhaps a guard for your throat and so on," there would have been a major negative reaction. Today it is accepted that those pieces of equipment, although they're sometimes controversial, are necessary.

That's why I think this is a step forward. This is not a step backward. This is not an unnecessary intervention; this is what I consider to be a necessary intervention.

I was concerned, as some members of this Legislature would be, that the responsibility of what I used to call the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations—I think it's now called Consumer and Business Services—for safety was taken away from them in such places as midways and circuses, where children are involved, or elevators, which are important. I think that is a role for government and I hope that there's a supervision of this piece of legislation by the ministries of government and not by some privatized organization in the province, because I think that would be a step backward.

I will be supporting this bill. I would be surprised if there isn't a good deal of support among members of this Legislature for a piece of legislation which is designed to

prevent tragedies, if possible—we can never remove the risk—and is designed to significantly reduce the risk of permanent injury or death, or even minor injury to those who are involved in horseback riding and are under the age of adulthood, which we define as 18.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm certainly pleased to rise today in support of the private member's bill put forth by my colleague.

The bill has a twofold purpose. It's entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001. "The purpose of the bill is to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 years by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that riders use proper safety equipment, including properly fitted tack. The operators of the establishments are also required to have the proper safety equipment available for hire at reasonable rates."

The second part of the bill also amends the Highway Traffic Act. It is an offence for any rider under the age of 18 years to ride or be mounted on a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment. Parents and guardians of riders under the age of 16 years are also guilty of an offence if they authorize or knowingly permit riders to contravene that restriction."

The purpose of the bill in terms of both aspects is to deal with the safety component for young riders. Being the father of a young rider myself, my second-oldest daughter, Lauren, takes riding lessons. I can say for the establishment where she rides, which is out in the member from Simcoe North's riding, in Oro-Medonte, they required the riders to purchase their own riding helmets and the equipment they needed. It's very important for a young rider of her age—she's eight now—to be wearing a properly fitted helmet and properly fitted tack, because the horses are obviously a fair size and for a young person to drop to the ground may result in some serious injury to that person.

This is not a minor issue in terms of rider safety, and the focus is dealing with the riding establishments in Ontario.

When you look at the facts about the horse industry in this province—and I want to share a couple of statistics. In a study undertaken in 1998, the total herd in Ontario at that time was approximately 290,000. Twenty per cent of Ontario horses are used for tourism activities. There's no central registration for riding establishments. The Ontario Equestrian Federation estimates there is a minimum of 1,500 riding establishments and possibly as many as 5,000. It's estimated that one million people participate in riding activities in Ontario on a regular or semi-regular basis.

What this legislation is dealing with specifically is safety standards for riders. Many riding establishments already provide helmet and boots to riders, but the legislation is necessary to ensure proper safety equipment is worn every time on every ride.

Other jurisdictions are also addressing this issue. In southern Ontario alone, 11 municipalities have adopted licensing bylaws in the last year to address this issue. In the United States, the state of New York passed a law in

early 2000 making it mandatory for people under 14 to wear helmets when riding horses. The city of Plantation in Florida has adopted a bylaw on the issue, and in the countries of France, Australia and New Zealand there's also been concern about rider safety.

What we're dealing with here is a bill that is designed to deal with riding establishments. Obviously it's directed at our young people in terms of making sure there are proper safety standards, proper safety equipment being available for those riders, and also dealing with the Highway Traffic Act to ensure that if you are going to ride a horse and you're in that age group, you are properly fitted with the safety equipment.

I'm pleased to speak on this bill, and I will be supporting it.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Let me stand in my place and offer the member from Thornhill congratulations on bringing forward very progressive legislation which protects children.

At the same time, let me offer to Paul and Laurie Hader my deepest sympathies. This is the two-year anniversary of your 10-year-old child Elizabeth's death. Being a father, I just can't imagine how painful that must be. I don't think we can imagine it unless we live it. So know that our thoughts and our prayers are with you, not only now but in the future. I'm sure this will provide some closure, what I would hope to be unanimous support would provide some closure to you because of your tragedy certainly, and it is a tragedy.

Let me tell you that this is not intrusive legislation. We in this House have a mandate to ensure that we do everything possible to protect the youth of this province. The member from Thornhill talks about protecting them during recreational activities. I say that's a very good opportunity to show leadership in this province when it comes to protecting kids.

1030

Mr and Mrs Hader will know that I have introduced legislation in the past with regard to protecting children involved in prostitution. The bills are Bills 22, 23 and 24. I think they're equally important as well, and I would hope the government acts quickly on this legislation. We know the government introduced my legislation before we prorogued the House and promised to introduce similar legislation in the new House but hasn't done so. Because you have experienced the tragedy of losing a child, you know how other parents who are losing children in many different ways would benefit from this legislation.

This is good legislation because it sets a standard for owners of businesses to operate within. It sets a standard whereby children who want to involve themselves in very wholesome, healthy, meaningful activities will be protected. Does it mean there will never be another fatality? No, it doesn't mean that. The world knows that. But it lessens the likelihood of tragedies occurring in the future, and I see that as very good legislation.

The Minister of Labour and I were talking earlier. We both have children who ski. There are so many other



things we can be doing to protect children in a recreational setting, in a sporting setting, in a cultural setting. This stuff is going to cost money to do, but I say it's money well invested. I say it's a meaningful investment in the future of Ontario, in what I believe to be its greatest resource: our children, who will be our leaders some day.

I would hope this legislation receives unanimous support when it is voted on today. There is need for committee work, as I think the member knows and as this House knows. I know that the shortcomings of the legislation will be dealt with at committee, but know that I will be supporting it.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It is a pleasure to rise this morning to speak to Bill 12, An Act to increase the safety of equestrian riders. I'd like to welcome the Hader family here as well this morning. I'd like to congratulate my colleague, Mrs Molinari, the member for Thornhill, for bringing forth this legislation, which I believe will protect the safety of youth in our province.

This bill is the end result of a number of untimely deaths of young Ontarians as a result of horseback riding accidents. A number of coroners' juries have made recommendations that support the need for this legislation. An example of this would be an excerpt I'll read from the verdict of the coroner's jury serving on the inquest into the death of Wade Sciscenti on January 18, 1980:

"We, the jury, feel that since helmets are required for motorcycling and skidooring, it should equally be requested for horseback riding and therefore recommends:

"1. that safety standards be set to have equestrian helmets approved by CSA standards

"2. that the wearing of CSA approved equestrian helmets be compulsory for all riding schools, riding stables and horseback riding."

I'll also read an excerpt from the Ontario Equestrian Federation news release, a major stakeholder that supports Bill 12:

"The private member's bill known as the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2000, introduced by Tina Molinari (MPP Thornhill) in the Legislature today is endorsed by the Ontario Equestrian Federation (OEF) and its member organization, the Association of Riding Establishments of Ontario (ARE). Following the repeal of the Riding Horse Establishment Act in 1996, members of ARE have been working on safety standards for both equine and rider welfare. In response to the tragic death of a young York region resident in April 1999 and, again this past summer, of a Durham region rider, the ARE with support from the OEF intensified its efforts to formulate minimum safety standards for the equestrian industry. Ms Molinari's proposal that appropriate footwear and a riding helmet be worn by those under the age of 18 years while riding a horse is commendable. Any and all efforts to ensure the safety of Ontario youth is a goal of the equine community; the support of the Legislative Assembly will help to assure that the experience of riding a horse is a positive one for all."

A section of this act that I believe is extremely important is section 4, which amends the Highway Traffic Act by making it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to be mounted on a horse on a highway without proper safety equipment. Before this bill is finally passed, I hope that will include township roads and county roads as well.

This is a very important issue in rural Ontario, where thousands of our residents own horses and often ride on the local roads. Often drivers of motorized vehicles passing horseback riders do not respect the fact that the riders may be inexperienced and the horse sensitive to vehicles. Quite often they do not slow down and there is a lot of noise from vehicles. I've seen a number of cases myself when driving the roads where the horse has reared and an accident has almost occurred. It is not uncommon for a horse to be disturbed, and a rider can be thrown off, causing serious injury. The headgear in particular could avoid these serious injuries.

Many communities, such as Aurora, north Pickering and Whitchurch-Stouffville, have passed bylaws requiring horse riding establishments to provide safety measures for persons riding. As well, other jurisdictions, such as Australia, have similar requirements for their young horse riders.

Currently there are Association of Riding Establishments of Ontario requirements for riding establishments to provide safety equipment. But unfortunately, not all places are part of this group and obey the requirements of this organization. That is why I feel this bill is so important.

Safety has been an important priority with this government. That is why I support this bill today, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak to it.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I was delaying my comments on this bill. I was waiting for something from the legislative library to come in, and unfortunately it's not here. So I will do the best I can.

I first of all want to say that we will be supporting this bill. We think it's an important step in the role we have as legislators in trying to find a way to secure and make sure that all activities that children and others are involved in are safe.

You will know, Mr Speaker—not that you were here in the Legislature at the time—that one of your colleagues who was in the Legislature between 1990 and 1995, Dianne Cunningham, presented a similar bill in the Legislature at the time, having to do with bicycle safety. If you remember, the bill basically said that all children under the age of 18 should have the obligation of wearing a bicycle helmet when riding their bicycles on the streets of Ontario. At the time she presented that private member's bill, we were the government—it was the NDP government—and we worked along with Mrs Cunningham to make sure that bill did get support not only here in private members' hour—which I have no doubt Mrs Molinari's bill will get here this morning—but we put the weight of the government behind the bill to make sure it went through the committee process and, at the end, the

bill would become law, and so it did. We as New Democrats believed then that it was important that we find ways to make activities that children and other Ontarians are involved in safe activities to engage in.

After the bill passed, it was proclaimed into law, and it wasn't until 1995, upon the Tories coming to government, that there was actual weakening of the bill Mrs Cunningham had put forward. If you remember the bill as I remember it—this is what I was waiting for from the legislative library, and so I may stand somewhat corrected—the bill had called for anybody under the age of 18 who was engaged in the activity of riding a bike to wear a bicycle helmet on all roads across Ontario. There were some people in the Conservative caucus at the time who were not comfortable with the bill. From the perspective they were coming from, they thought the bill went a little too far and was a little too strong. In the view of our government, the NDP government at the time, it was a pretty good idea.

When the Tories got to power in 1995, they weakened the bill. I think what they did was lower the age at which a child had to wear a helmet, and I think there were also limitations on where the helmets would be needed. In other words, would they be needed on country roads versus city streets? I think that's rather unfortunate.

I'm hoping that when this bill passes, we're able to refer the bill to committee and hopefully try to find a way to bring back those aspects of Mrs Cunningham's bill that were watered down by the Conservative government, because I believe that what Mrs Cunningham did was a step in the right direction. Certainly she understands this issue very well as a mother of a child who is brain-injured because of an accident and understands first-hand what happens; in this particular case, what happened to her son.

1040

I know in my own constituency of Timmins-James Bay and my former constituency of Cochrane South, prior to the amalgamation of the ridings, there were a number of young people who were involved in bicycle accidents who did get brain-injured and had to deal with the ramifications of that. Unfortunately, a number of them were killed as well. Would the helmets have saved their lives? Would the helmets have prevented brain injury? I think in some cases the answer is a definite yes. So anything we can do here to find a way to not only allow this bill to pass this morning but to go into committee in order not only to strengthen the provisions of this bill, but to take a look at how we're able to deal with Mrs Cunningham's bill—I always felt it was rather unfortunate that the Conservative government had weakened those aspects of the bill that were put forward by Mrs Cunningham that I think were well in keeping with what a Legislative Assembly should be doing when it comes to bills.

The other thing I want to say is that I think we should make sure to put on the record and make clear for those who are participating in the debate this morning, either here in the Legislature, in the galleries or back home, that

I have no doubt this bill will pass this morning. If anybody votes against it, I would be highly, highly surprised. The unfortunate part is that when private members' bills are introduced here, far too often it is the government that refuses, in almost 99% of cases, to allow the bills to go past second reading. At times a bill may even end up at a committee level, but there's maybe one bill per term of government that's put forward at private members' hour that basically goes all the way through, becoming an actual law in the province of Ontario.

I think that's unfortunate, and I want to raise it in the context of this debate, because I think there is something about private members' hour. We, as a Legislature, if we truly believe in democratic principles, should be looking at how we reform our Legislature to allow members like Mrs Molinari and others to bring forward bills that are important to them as individuals, important to their communities, their constituencies, and to the province overall. It's a good, non-partisan way of being able to introduce legislation that is well-meaning and legislation that could make a meaningful difference to the people of Ontario. So I raise in the context of this debate the need that we move forward on a parliamentary reform package that allows us to be able to deal with how we find ways to make this Legislature work in the new millennium.

You know, Mr Speaker, as a member of this assembly and somebody who understands the rules of this assembly well as the deputy Deputy Speaker, this system of ours was built some 300 years ago by the British at the mother of all Parliaments in England and really has not changed so much as far as how the rules work over those 300 years. I think 300 years ago it made some sense to have a Legislature elected the way that we do today, but in a modern democracy in the new millennium, the year 2000, I think it's rather weird and I think somewhat obnoxious a democracy that we have a system of government that says you can elect a majority government in this House with 42% of the popular vote, because that's what happened in the last provincial election: Mike Harris got 42% of the popular vote and has more than 60% of the seats in the House, and therefore Mike Harris can do what he wants by virtue of that majority.

I will also argue that the Bob Rae government had 38% of the vote. We had 38% of the overall vote in the province of Ontario and we had 65% of the seats in the House. I think that's wrong. It doesn't matter who the government is, what the party is; I believe that democracy should reflect and this Legislature should reflect what happens in a general election. That to me would be true democracy.

I raise it in the context of this debate because I think it comes back to Mrs Molinari's bill and the problem we have in our current system of government because of that quirk that the government, by majority in the House, even though they don't have a majority of the electorate in the election, are able to control everything that happens in the House. So members such as—and I wish I knew the member's riding; I don't have the list in front of me. I keep on mentioning you by name.

**Mrs Molinari:** Thornhill.



**Mr Bisson:** Thornhill; I'm sorry. I was doing that not because I was trying to be ornery or anything; I just didn't know the name of your riding.

The member for Thornhill I think brings forward a bill that is reasoned, a bill that is based on some personal experience, a bill that has been certainly something that she cares deeply about and a bill that all members of this assembly can support. I think that's good and I think that's right and I think we should move forward with that. However, I am fearful in the context of our current political system that we have of "first past the post," because that's what you call the British parliamentary system, that unfortunately, because our system is so antiquated, a very good bill will pass here this morning at second reading, and if it passes at third reading and goes on to become legislation, it will be one of but a few. It will be one out of how many bills we pass in this House by way of private members' hour? I think that's wrong, because the member from Thornhill brings to this Legislature, as other members have done on all sides and in all parties around this House, bills that are reasoned, bills that are thought through, bills that speak to a constituency, bills as in this case that would save lives or prevent injury. But because of our parliamentary system, she has to have the full support of the government to allow that bill to go forward. She has to overcome the barrier of getting full support of the Premier and the cabinet and the government, which they'll demonstrate this morning by way of a vote. But it stalls after that because, if it doesn't fall into the overall context of the political message the government is trying to send, there is very little chance that the bill will become law. I think that's unfortunate.

I say again—I listened to the throne speech earlier, when the government talked about needing to open up the House to a bit more democracy—I would argue they should go to the next step. They should work with me, as the critic responsible in our party for looking at the whole issue of democracy—an opportunity to really look by way of a non-partisan, all-party committee of this Legislature—to take a look at the various forms of electoral reform, such as what we have in Germany, New Zealand and other places, so we can look at how to develop a made-in-Ontario model that says we will have a general election the way we do now, that at the end of the day every citizen will have the right to elect his/her representative the same way we do now, but if the vote for the party is 42%, as it was with Mike Harris, that number of seats in the House will only equal the 42%. That way, for Mike Harris to be able to move forward with his agenda, he would have to work with both opposition parties to either amend and make changes to the legislation so it's acceptable to either Liberals or New Democrats, or not go forward with the legislation at all, something that probably would be right.

I would say in a case like this, it would be a good example of how an individual member would have the ability to influence the overall legislative agenda of a government of this Legislature, because the backbenchers of the Conservative government under such a system

would have to be listened to a little bit more—quite a bit more, I would argue—than they are now, because Mr Harris, to pass his legislation, would have to have the support of Mrs Molinari not only as a backbencher but as a member of this Legislature. There would need to be a certain amount of trading off as far as making sure he gives support to the things that she wants.

I think this is a bill that's well worth supporting. It's something our caucus will definitely support. I hope that this bill will be referred to a standing committee of the Legislature, where we have an opportunity to look at it and find ways of making sure it is strengthened and that it works for children, for the people across this province. But, more important, I'm hoping that at that committee level we're able to bring back certain aspects of the bill that Mrs Dianne Cunningham, a Conservative member, brought to this House I believe in 1992 or 1993, which I think was a step in the right direction by way of trying to protect children on bicycles.

With that, I thank you for this opportunity to participate in the debate and look forward to seeing this bill go to committee. If we're all lucky, it will be one of the very few bills, possibly, that make it all the way to legislation in the House. I'm not hopeful that it will happen, but let's hope it happens.

**Mrs Molinari:** I'd like to thank the member from St Catharines, the member from Sudbury, the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, the member from Simcoe North and the member from Timmins-James Bay for their participation in the debate this morning. I'm pleased to hear there is so much support in the Legislature for this very important and crucial bill.

I started off my opening comments talking about some of the coroners' comments in some of the deaths. I'd like to mention another death, that of 12-year-old Jamie Shaw. The jury's recommendation at that time was that it be made mandatory that suitable protective headgear and footwear be made available to all riding establishments.

I'm pleased to get support from everyone here today for this bill. Bill 12 does not place unreasonable demands on business owners. What is unreasonable is that the Ontario public be expected to continue to ride in unsafe circumstances. Over two decades have passed since this became an issue with public attention.

**1050**

I want to quote from a magazine that's called *The Horse: Your Guide to Equine Health Care*. There's an interesting article here which says that while statistics show that horses can be hazardous to your health, there are ways to mitigate the risks. It talks about some of the consequences: "A survey, from Victoria, Australia, noted that for children, riding was the third-highest recreational activity requiring hospital admission." It goes on to say, "Reported head injuries are less frequent but more serious ... yet head injuries cause two thirds of deaths.... As examples of horse-related fatality rates, British Columbia, Canada, reported a rate of one in 10,000 riders."

There are a lot of statistics to show the necessity of a bill like this being passed. Also, in 1999, New York state

passed a law requiring rental horse providers and trainers to supply helmets to beginning riders and those less than 14 years of age.

I want to comment on some of the issues the member from Timmins-James Bay brought out about amendments to the bills and those amendments that were made to Mrs Cunningham's bill. The amendments are made to bills when they go into a committee and you have hearings and consultations. At times, there are important things that need to be considered before the bill is brought back for third reading. That's the process you go through in the consultation. I'm very optimistic that this bill will become law. I will be recommending that it go to a standing committee, and that that committee have the opportunity to have hearings and to listen to those who have an intense interest in the issue and make the bill much better than what it is.

I've done several consultations throughout before drafting this bill and I must say that some of the establishments wanted this bill to be much stronger. It's difficult to put a bill forward and have in it everything that is needed to make it safe. It's important that a bill is passed. I see this as an actual first step toward the safety of all equestrian riders in the province of Ontario.

After further consultation with some equine lawyers, as well as the OEF and the ARE, there are three amendments that I will be proposing to Bill 12 when it reaches committee. The first will be to strike from section 2(1) the words "within the grounds of the establishment," and insert after "any horse provided by the rider" the following: "from the stables of the establishment"; in paragraph 2 of subsection 2(1), the deletion of the words "and smooth"; and the final amendment will be in paragraph 3, with the deletion of the word "suitable." I believe some of these amendments will make the bill better and will reflect some of the concerns that came to my attention after the bill had been drafted.

Bill 12 is clearly a much-needed piece of legislation. It is the opportunity for our elected members here in the House to show the parents of Elizabeth, Wayne, Wade, Jamie and all the other victims of riding accidents that Ontario puts safety first, and the safety of all its citizens. I'm pleased to host the Haders, who are here today. I'm pleased to assure them that I'm very optimistic that this bill will receive third reading, that this bill will become law, that it will go to committee and, I believe, with the support of all of the House here today. Bills that don't reach, as the member mentioned—there are difficulties when you don't have all-party agreement. This bill is a non-political bill. It's a safety bill. It's something that is necessary in the province of Ontario. Having heard all the members and the support here today, I truly believe this bill will become law, so Elizabeth's parents can feel assured that these accidents will never happen again.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Thornhill has two more minutes.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just wanted to bring to the attention of the House that our legislative pages unfortunately will be leaving us today.

This is their last day and they, I believe, have the dubious distinction of having had the shortest rotation in the Legislature. You would know that normally pages are here from four to five weeks but, unfortunately, this group is down to three weeks. I'm coming to my point, Mr Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker:** This is not a point of order. I think this afternoon there will be the proper proclamation of that.

#### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF

Mr Smitherman moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to amend the Executive Council Act respecting an institution of democracy in the Legislative Assembly / Projet de loi 21, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil exécutif concernant une institution démocratique de l'Assemblée législative.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Pursuant to standing order 96, the member has 10 minutes to make his presentation.

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** On a point of order, Speaker: I would like to have an opportunity to make a couple of submissions that this bill is out of order in that it contravenes not only the standing orders, but the traditions of this place. As we all know—

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker—

**Mr Tilson:** How can you interrupt my point of order?

**Mr Colle:** You're interrupting his 10 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey.

**Mr Tilson:** I do wish to submit that this bill is out of order and should not be debated. The tradition of this place, which has been created by various Speakers since the history of this place began, has been that there shouldn't be accusations by members that other members are absent from this place. In fact, this point was made by Speaker Carr as late as April 23 last, when he said that the issue the member raises has to do with attendance by members of the executive at the daily oral question period.

The House has never imposed an obligation upon members to attend all meetings of the Legislature. Indeed, this assembly is constitutionally competent to carry out its business with a quorum of 12 members. Additionally, the Speaker is not vested with the authority to compel the attendance of any member. As we all know, the many and varied duties of being an elected member of this place often legitimately demand our attendance elsewhere.



Honourable members are assumed by their honourable colleagues to have valid and defensible and justifiable reasons for being absent from the House when it is meeting. This is one of the principal reasons that it is prohibited by our traditions and practices to draw the attention of the House to the absence of another member.

What this bill is submitting is that not all members should be identified as being absent or present, but certain members of this place should be identified as being present or absent. Clearly, what the member is trying to do is to change the rules of this place, to change the tradition of this place, by coming through the back door of private members' hour, which is an hour.

I submit that it is most improper for the member to do that. In fact, if this bill is held as being in order, then there is nothing to prevent government members, in their turn in private members' or any other members, to change the standing orders of this place during private members' hour, and I would submit that that is a most improper forum to do that sort of thing.

So Mr Speaker, I would ask your ruling that this bill be deemed to be out of order.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Contrary to my better judgment, I would like to hear the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale on a point of order.

**Mr Smitherman:** Well, the use of the words "Contrary to my better judgment" leads me to believe that there may be some prejudice. I wonder, Mr Speaker, whether I might offer contradictory evidence to the information submitted by the member from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey. I may have the order wrong but I think I got the counties right.

1100

Earlier this week in the House, in answer to a question that I posed, the Premier in fact drew attention to the absences of a member. Frankly, the government seeks to use what may be considered by some as a tradition of this House to broaden the protection against them being called to account for their absences.

But the bill does not speak specifically to the issue or to the absence of any one particular individual. It seeks simply to suggest that there ought to be an established floor for attendance in this place for members of the cabinet, which would, of course, include the Premier.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Smitherman:** Other members, including the member who chooses to heckle me, the Minister of Labour, have, when they stood in opposition, raised the issue of attendance in this place. What we have seen over the last two years in an effort to protect the government from being held accountable is an attempt to broaden the standing orders to the point where the whole issue of accountability can't be raised in this House.

I would say, using the very broad interpretation offered by the previous speaker, that the Premier was in fact out of order, but not so called by Speaker Carr; I think a reflection of the fact that it is appropriate to have a debate with respect to accountability.

When the Premier, in responding to me, said, "I was wondering whether you, with all of your onerous responsibility in the Legislature, right in your own riding, might commit to a little better attendance, it seems to me," was the Speaker proper in allowing the Premier to use a reference to my attendance in the Legislature? Did I stand on a point of personal privilege or seek to use the standing orders when the Premier made an attempt to hold me accountable? I did not, because I view it as fair game to hold members accountable.

This bill, if we read the sections, does not raise an issue of the Premier's or any individual's particular attendance. It does suggest there ought to be a standard of accountability for members of the cabinet—

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. When there are two of us standing, one of us is out of order and it's not me.

The Chair recognizes the member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** For the record, I just want to put a couple of things with regard to this move by the Conservative government to try to stifle what is, in my view and the view of our caucus, a motion that should be debated in the House.

Section 96(a): "Unless otherwise ordered, each Thursday during the session, the House will meet in the morning for the consideration of private members' public business. On such a day ... there shall be not more than two items of private members' public business." So he's entitled. It's the second item coming forward.

If you go back and read section (h), it talks about no adjournment of the debate. Section 96(h) says: "There shall be no adjournment of the debate on any item of private members' public business."

I would submit what we have here is an attempt on the part of the government to stifle a motion that they're not in agreement with. That's purely what's happening here. I think every member has a right, according to the standing orders, to introduce motions or bills in the House. Some motions or bills may or may not be acceptable to a government party or to opposition parties, but nonetheless, it is the basic tenet of private members' hour to allow members to bring before the House an item they think is important as an individual member, by way of bills or motions, and that needs to be debated.

Agree or not agree—I'm almost finished—

**The Acting Speaker:** You are finished. I'll take two more. I'll hear from the member for Etobicoke Centre and the member for Sudbury.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I certainly will live by whatever ruling you make and I can understand the difficulty with respect to the ruling, because it is a rather complicated and difficult ruling you'll have to make.

I would like just to go on the record to suggest, Mr Speaker, particularly to you and maybe the members of the opposition, that if we do allow a private member's bill to in fact deal with the standing orders, then there can be no debate in future if the government chooses to change the standing orders by private members' hour—in

essence, bring in a private member's motion that says the standing orders shall change, and if the government House leader chooses to have one day's debate or two days' debate or three days' debate on second reading of any bill, that would be held in order. It can be done with one hour of debate in private members' hour. That can be done without the full-fledged debate of a government bill. I caution the members opposite. If that's the road you choose to go down, be very, very careful.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The table has informed me that the challenge is in order, the point of order is in order, so I won't debate that, but there is a fundamental principle here that I don't think we should lose account of on either side of the House and that's the issue of accountability.

You're presupposing what the member is going to say. This member may stand up and only speak about accountability, with no reference to anything except accountability. To deny him that right is to deny him a right that I believe he has. I would suggest to you, Speaker, in your ruling understand that this bill as presented is about accountability. As such, if in fact the government is saying that being held accountable is out of order, I would suggest that we are in very dire straits in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to make clear to the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale that when I said that it was against my better judgment, I meant that I do not entertain debate on points of order. I take a point of order from a member and I rule on it. I want to be very clear about that.

I want to address the point of order. In this place, of all places, we depend on our own perception of a democratic right. I realize that the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey has some concerns and has raised them legitimately. I think that in the long run and at the end of the day the democracy of this chamber in particular will be best served if we hear the debate and we make our decision at the end of that time. That is my ruling.

**Mr Smitherman:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I'd like to congratulate the member on his attempts to get into cabinet, which have been feeble and have not served him well to this point.

I would say that this debate has been framed outside of this place. People know why there is an issue of accountability and why it is necessary for a private member to be addressing this issue in this fashion today. It is not something that I chose to do lightly. It was because as a former staffer to a former Premier of Ontario who came to question period 80% of the time, I've been struck that there has been unequal participation in that tradition over the course of history here.

I want to read what this act is about. It is very clear, it is very simple, and it is fundamentally about accountability. This is an amendment to the Executive Council Act. It is amended by adding the following section:

"If, at the end of a session of the Legislature, a minister of the crown has failed to attend 60% of the oral question periods held during the session, \$100 shall be

deducted from the minister's salary for each occasion by which his or her attendance fell short of 60%."

That is something that has been construed by members of the—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Smitherman:** There is a sickness provision in there. It has been built on the basis of accountability and it takes advantage of what we know to be true. What we know to be true is that there are some things that on an occasional basis, and perhaps up to 40% of the time, might otherwise call for members of the cabinet to be absent from question period. It allows for that. It does not establish a ceiling which is so difficult to reach: 60%, meaning that 40% of the time it might be appropriate to be elsewhere. It deals with provisions if a member of the cabinet was sick. It does not create an onerous test. It is not a bar that is all that difficult to get to.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Smitherman:** The Minister of Labour is here today heckling me, but it will be highlighted in the course of this debate that this is the same kind of thing that he has historically called for. He forgets, now that he's on the other side, that he is there as a member of the cabinet and his job, his sole responsibility, is to try and seek out to protect those who would attempt to run from the kind of accountability that this speaks to.

1110

This is based on a personal experience. Two years ago I was a newly elected member. I came to this place and I was struck by the fact that—I had previously worked for a Premier as a legislative assistant. On those days when he wasn't able to make it to question period, every effort having been done to do so, he worked hard to be here. Yet we see that there are different—the Premier makes my case for me. He makes my case for me because he has an instinct for accountability. When push comes to shove, the Premier this week made my case for me when he said, "I was wondering whether you," speaking of me, "with all of your onerous responsibility in the Legislature, right in your own riding, might commit to a little better attendance, it seems to me." The Premier made my case for the basic tenet of accountability that is the heart of this bill, because we understand that we have that responsibility.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Smitherman:** Government members will heckle me on this point, Mr Speaker, but my record stands in sharp contrast to the one whom they are here defending today, because I was here for a vast majority of those days.

I want to say that this "great man" defence has been used to explain away absences. We all recognize that different people in this chamber have a different level of responsibility. Those on this side seek to be there and we seek to carry out those responsibilities that the Premier this week referred to as "onerous." We don't view them as such. We view them as important responsibilities, and we seek every single day to be in that position. The people of Ontario will make that judgment, as they had.



We recognize that you are the government, and what comes with that is a set of responsibilities that we don't currently have.

But I wonder if we don't take that defence too far. The Premier, in answering a question earlier this week, said to me, "I also commit to travel the globe, to seek out every job, every investment"—he only had the one-arm pump—"every opportunity, because ours is a growth agenda. I commit to continue to put the time into the job that the job requires." We would all understand that as the Premier of this province he does have a set of responsibilities that we don't have. But I wonder why it is this Premier who, in contrast to past Premiers, who all had the same set of responsibilities, falls so far short of the same mark that they met. I wonder why it is that the Prime Minister of Canada, who, we would argue, has more responsibility to travel the globe, more responsibility to represent Canada, more responsibility to represent a broad country, a country so huge that it's not possible always to be one airline flight away from question period, and yet this same Prime Minister, faced with the onslaught of questions in the House of Commons, has made it to 55% of the sessions in the Legislature. He doesn't stand and use a defence which has feebly been offered by others to make excuses for their absences.

Earlier this morning there was a group from St Joseph's over on Wellesley Street, a group of high school students. These kids have heard a lot about codes of conduct. There are certain expectations placed on them in their student lives to be in attendance on a regular basis in their classrooms so that they can learn. There is a student code of conduct. I note that Jarvis Collegiate has an attendance and absences report for their Grade 9 students that says, "The school does not condone holidays beyond the regular break periods."

The reason that I realized I should push forward with this and that I should spend time working on this issue of accountability is because every working Ontarian, every kid, every person with responsibilities, understands that a 60% threshold for attendance is appropriate. When the contrast is painted for them about the real numbers for certain of our political representatives in Ontario, they're shocked. They're shocked and dismayed that all of the language that is heard from this government, all of the empty, useless, hollow rhetoric from this government on accountability, is destroyed when these numbers are raised which paint such a stark contrast to the reality of the accountability that they talk about. These numbers destroy it and show up those 11 references in the throne speech to accountability, demonstrate the extent to which these are just hollow words by a government which chooses to use the rhetoric but will not do the walk.

That's what this is all about, and that's why I have decided that this is an issue that deserves attention and that I should push forward on it. This is just one more element of the government's attempts over the course of their time here to diminish this place. That's what this is. This is one more element of a deliberate attempt to make

this place much less relevant and to make our democracy in Ontario much less relevant. The fundamental premise of accountability on the part of the head of the government and members of the cabinet is diminished by a lack of respect for being in one's House.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Where were you on Friday, George?

**Mr Smitherman:** I think that would be out of order.

I think we have seen on the part of this government a commitment to shorter sessions, to an absence of legislative committees that travel and meet with Ontarians. We have seen dramatic increases in the use of closure and time allocations. I would submit to you, Mr Speaker, to members of this House and to Ontarians that you have a government in Ontario which seeks to govern by fiat, which seeks to embody in its legislation all of the power to regulate through cabinet and to diminish the role of this place. The member for Brampton Centre last week, in heckling in this House, said this is just an ivory tower; everything meaningful that happens here happens stemming from the cabinet, order-in-council appointments and regulations.

So I send a message to members of this Legislature and to Ontarians that if you want this place to matter over time, the principle of accountability which is at the heart of this bill makes it necessary to be supported. I would urge all members to go back to their ridings and say that you voted in favour of a bill that expected members of the cabinet to be in their place for the daily question period 60% of the time.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** Mr Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, the member for Kitchener Centre, and the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey.

When the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale tabled his private member's bill, I couldn't wait for the chance to speak on it. By putting forward this bill, it has reinforced my opinion that the McGuinty Liberals just don't get it. I am here not only as an MPP, but also to champion the truth. It's time to set the record straight.

I strongly believe that we, as politicians, must be accountable to the voters and the taxpayers of this province. In the last election, the people of Ontario had a clear choice: the strong leadership of Mike Harris and his government, or the untrustworthy flip-flops of the McGuinty Liberals, who will say anything to get themselves re-elected.

The Premier made a commitment in his throne speech to take his message directly to people across Ontario. In fact, he has visited communities all across this province, including Ottawa, Hamilton and Sudbury, to find out what issues they are concerned about. Indeed, he shows a true respect for all voters and taxpayers in this province.

The Premier has made the commitment that he and his ministers will be here in the House and accountable for an appropriate amount of time, but he also committed to travel and to seek out every job, every investment and

every opportunity that would benefit Ontarians. The Mike Harris team has a genuinely pro-growth agenda for this province.

Mr Smitherman talks about accountability, but where was he during the second and third readings of Bill 13, the Back to School Act for Toronto and Windsor? Perhaps the support staff strike was not an important issue for Mr Smitherman or his constituents—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would remind the member that we refer to other members by their riding.

**Ms Mushinski:** Or perhaps the member just doesn't care.

If the member wants to discuss accountability, why is it that he, as a backbench MPP with no out-of-riding responsibilities, missed 28% of recorded votes held in the 37th session of Parliament, despite the fact that his riding office is only five blocks from Queen's Park? Even more disturbing, the member missed the vote on the third reading of Christopher's Law, the introduction of the sex offender registry—

*Interjection.*

1120

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I realize there are a lot of things you want to get into in debate, but I would rather keep this at a level where we aren't being very personal. By that, I mean referring to individual members and what you might perceive as their attention to this place. I'll not allow that.

**Ms Mushinski:** I would ask the member if the protection of children isn't important to him.

After they demanded—and I repeat, demanded—committee hearings on the Children and Family Services Amendment Act, 2000, the members of the Liberal caucus blew off the hearings in Sault Ste Marie. Not even one Liberal showed up for that meeting. Shame on you and shame on your caucus for thinking you have the higher moral ground. Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

Mr Smitherman, you have no right to throw stones. I have here a list—

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to remind the member that I've asked that we refer to other members by their riding names.

**Ms Mushinski:** Sorry. Member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, you have no right to throw stones. I have here a list of the sessions the member has missed in the 37th Parliament alone. In case you were wondering, you missed 42 sessions.

**Mr Bartolucci:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You have repeatedly informed the House that you are not going to entertain discussion about absenteeism in the House, and yet the member continues to speak about absenteeism. I believe she is in fact challenging the Chair, and I would ask you to rule to ensure she no longer does that.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On two points of order, Mr Speaker: The first point of order is, it's fundamentally impossible to debate this bill that talks about attendance

in the House without speaking to the issue of attendance in the House. The second point of order is, the Liberals seem to be very touchy when we bring forward issues with respect to attendance. The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale spoke about the attendance of the Premier in this House.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll take those because I was kind of interrupted—I don't take two points of order from one member. But as I recall—I'll call the first one A and the second one B—neither is a point of order.

**Mr Bisson:** Would you take a third point of order, Mr Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Timmins-James Bay on a point of order.

**Mr Bisson:** As you well know, the standing orders preclude members from referring to somebody's absence in the House. I try for a third time to bring her to order.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point of order. I'm ever so glad you brought that to my attention.

The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough Centre.

**Ms Mushinski:** I'll speak to my track record. My constituents are proud of the fact I did not miss third reading on the Taxpayer Protection Act, the Safe Schools Act or the act to resolve the labour dispute between elementary teachers and the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, something of course the Liberals voted against.

Yes, I'm sure that supporters are quite honoured that the Liberals are too important to attend sessions where their own caucus tried to pass motions on tuition fees or the Adams mine crisis. My constituents don't have that honour. I believe they deserve an MPP who truly represents them.

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** I'll be sharing my time with the member from St Catharines and my colleague from Lennox-Frontenac-Addington. I think I missed one, but I apologize.

I won't refer to anybody's attendance record other than my own. When we look at the first session of the 37th Parliament, there were 166 votes taken within this Legislature and I'm glad to say that I made 148 of them or 89.1%. The best record in the House—I won't mention the individual, but he attended 160 of 166 votes. When you look at the leaders of the three parties—and I won't refer to any leader in particular—one leader attended 50.6% of the votes, another leader attended 48.1% of the votes and one leader attended 37.3% of the votes. That one individual was number 62 in the total ranking.

I had an opportunity to read a book by Graham White, *The Ontario Legislature*. In terms of members' attendance, media attention and the overall political import, question period is arguably the most significant proceeding of the Ontario Legislature. I think that says it all right there, that it is of extreme importance to be here. I look too at some research work that my colleague Richard Patten from Ottawa Centre has undertaken, looking at how democracy has been attacked in this province by this government; we look at the unprecedented con-



stant usage of time allocation to cut off debate; the frequent use of omnibus legislation; question period being made redundant by individuals not attending—some individuals have the lowest record in history of people who should be in attendance who, for whatever reason, choose not to show up; the number of committees has been cut and their input reduced; the rigging of sessional dates. When we have our evening sessions we should be having question period. Let's have an extra question period. That's not happening. The politicization of previously non-partisan aspects of House business; clauses and large bills which de facto eliminate the Legislature from the process, and it goes on and on. It's a very sad day to see how democracy has been attacked by this government, and they speak of accountability.

I think it's important to look back. Let's read from the Hansard of 1994. It's interesting to hear what one member had to say. "It is rather alarming when you calculate exactly the length of time that this government will be in session, being answerable to the people of the province of Ontario.... When this House is adjourned and we are not in our places here, there is a belief out there in the broader public that the government isn't in fact answering or doing the things it should be doing or answering the concerns of the private sector or us or the needs of the people ... This is the place where they must answer for their decision-making and come clean on issues and the latest issue that hits the newspapers and television stations.... 'Why is it you don't sit? Why are you not meeting? Why are you not dealing with the government?' I have no really good answer other than to say, 'These people don't want to be here.'"

**Interjection:** Who said that?

**Mr Peters:** You know who said that? The Minister of Labour. How can this government stand up and say today that they're accountable when seven years ago, in this very Legislature, they condemned the government for not speaking and not having this Legislature sit?

I think it's important that we support this legislation. I would like to see it taken beyond just the members of the executive. I think it would be important for our constituents to know the attendance record of all 103 members in this Legislature. As a municipal politician, when I arrived at a council meeting, the city clerk at that time would take attendance. I think it's important for our constituents to know what our attendance is within this Legislature.

I understand that there are individuals who have a heavy workload of things they have to do and that there are times when they can't be in attendance in this Legislature. But in a democratically elected Legislature as the one we sit in here today, I think it's incumbent on those who are the leaders of the government to be here and answerable and accountable to the citizens of Ontario. This is the only opportunity the opposition has to keep the government accountable, to question the government on issues that are put forward.

In my remaining time I'd just like to talk about a couple of other issues that this government has shown a

lack of accountability on. Why doesn't this government call an inquiry into what happened in Ipperwash? There's no accountability. I'd love to see an inquiry called into what transpired at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, why this government left a gentleman by the name of Roland Carey hanging out to dry. I just can't believe it. There should be an inquiry held.

You want to show accountability? Support this legislation.

1130

**Mr Bisson:** I am in a bit of an odd position here. I understand where the frustration of the member comes from and I understand the member, as did the now Minister of Labour, who was then the finance critic when we were in government, gets frustrated when the Premier often doesn't show up for question period, or certain ministers of the crown, to be able to answer questions of critics. For example, recently there have been a couple of issues up in my constituency that I as the critic as well have been wanting to raise. I've had to put those questions on the back burner for the better part of two weeks because the Premier was otherwise engaged, travelling around the province. I understand the frustration, because you go back as a member and people in your constituency—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bisson:** Would you please—

**Ms Mushinski:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It seems to me, if I recall correctly, that you were very quick to admonish both the Liberals and the government members for referring specifically to the absence of ministers and the Premier, and I would ask you to rule in this case.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point of order. You're absolutely right, and I will try to use the same judgment here.

The Chair recognizes the member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Bisson:** Monsieur le Président, comme toujours, merci beaucoup. C'est un très grand plaisir d'être ici avec vous aujourd'hui.

As I was saying, I understand the frustration of the member, because recently I've been in a situation, as you well know. There's a huge issue in northeastern Ontario having to do with the ONTC and the ONR. People across northern Ontario, especially the northeast, are wanting to have questions asked of the Premier and other ministers about this particular issue, and I've had to hold off asking questions because the Premier—I can't say he wasn't here, because that wouldn't be parliamentary.

**The Acting Speaker:** There are other ministers, and I think I want to get past that. I think we all do.

**Mr Bisson:** OK, I do want to get past that, and if I'm just allowed a second, I'm about there. I'm just saying you have to hold back those questions. So I understand the frustration of the member.

However, I have a bit of difficulty, and I'm going to listen to this debate very intently before deciding if I'm going to vote in favour or opposed. But I want the mem-

ber to know that generally I'm opposed to this type of legislation. I remember the Conservatives having brought legislation to this House where they wanted to take pay from members when members had been thrown out of the House. I thought that was wrong because I felt at times government members and opposition members may get quite upset over an issue, emotions may take over and they may get thrown out of the House. They're doing their jobs; they're speaking up on an issue that's important to them and their constituency. I didn't feel then that it was right for the government members to introduce a bill that would allow a deduction off a member's pay for having been thrown out of the House.

As well, I'm not in favour generally of having to take attendance here in the Legislature. Listen, we're not doing ourselves a service here. Not every member of the Legislature can be in the House at all times. Premiers, critics, ministers, opposition leaders and backbenchers all have responsibilities that sometimes take them away from the Legislature. I do agree, however—the standing orders don't allow me to say that the Premier hasn't been here very much, and I won't say that. I just want to say that it is real that members do have to get away from here from time to time to deal with issues in their critic portfolios and their constituencies or within their cabinet areas. I wouldn't want us seen—

**Ms Mushinski:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I notice that three Liberals have just left the House and I don't believe we have a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you check for a quorum, please.

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr Bisson:** Does this mean to say that the member doesn't know how to count, Mr Speaker? Boy, I thought they were good at that. But anyway, that's another story.

I generally am not in favour of legislation that basically is punitive, trying to give an impression that if a member is not in the House, somehow they are not doing their job. It is true that members have to be away from here at times in order to deal with issues in their constituencies or within their cabinet responsibilities or their critic responsibilities. So I don't want to leave that impression.

But I do understand the frustration, and I think that's why the member brings it forward. There are a whole bunch of issues that come into play here. I think one of the big issues is that this current system of parliamentary democracy doesn't work. I spoke on this a little bit earlier today and you will hear me speak about it some more. We are in a system that was designed over 300 years ago. We have an electoral system that's called "first past the post" that allows situations to happen such as have happened in this province for the last 100 years: a government gets elected with less than 50% of the vote but, because of the first-past-the-post system, they end up with better than 50% of the seats. For example, in

Ontario Bob Rae in 1990 was elected with 38% of the vote but got 65% of the seats in the Legislature. Mike Harris got elected with 42% of the general vote. He got over 60% of the seats in the Legislature. I think that's wrong. It doesn't reflect what democracy should be all about.

I would hope that as legislators at the beginning of this new millennium, we try to find a way to modernize our democracies so that we look at some of the examples where parliamentary democracies have modernized themselves, such as what has happened in Germany, New Zealand and in many other jurisdictions where they've kept parts of the old system intact, because people are used to the idea of electing their own representatives, but have looked at how you're able to create a proportional representation system that allows no government to have more seats in the House than the percentage they got in a general election.

So the Germans say, "If you, Mike Harris, got 42% of the vote, you only get 42% of the seats in the House." I think that makes sense, because it means that if this member has a bill he wants to bring forward, he would have an opportunity to do so in a much better way than currently is allowed under this system. We know what is going to happen this morning. The government, by majority, is going to get up and vote against this bill, and this bill will be quashed.

I want to support your bill in the sense of trying to give you support in what you're trying to get at, which is accountability. But this system is not going to allow this bill to go forward, and I think that's wrong. Under a PR system, if a member brings a bill forward, the government is not necessarily in control of everything that happens. In this case, if we had had the election of 1999—the Tories with 42% of the vote and the New Democrats and Liberals with the remaining 58%—we would have a certain say about what happens in this Legislature. I don't think this member would be bringing this bill forward, because the system would be more accountable. To me, that's the root cause of the problem. The root cause is that we have to change the system.

Our democratic system is over 300 years old, and we need to modernize it to make it reflect this new millennium. I think we have to stop looking at the past, when it comes to this democratic system, and keep our eyes on the future. We have to look at how we can make this place work, so that when Ontarians look in, either by way of television or by coming here to watch us in person, they're able to look at this Legislature and say, "Yes, this Legislature reflects me, and my views are being presented on the floor of the Legislature." As it stands now, if you're not a Conservative—and, I would argue, a very right-wing Conservative—your views are not being represented by way of legislation in this House.

Many things are under attack that we hold dear and dear to us, such as our public system of education and our public system of health care, where now they're talking about privatizing hospitals. Because Harris got 42% of the vote in the last election and has over 60% of



the seats in the House, he can darn well do what he pleases and there is nothing the combined 58% of the opposition can do about it. Even though we got 58% of the vote between two opposition parties, we have no way of affecting the government in what they're trying to do. So I would argue that we need to change the system. It's not bills like this that will fix our frustration; we need to change the system. The system itself is flawed, and we need to look at how to modernize it.

I hope that if we were to bring this in to a committee, we would look at some other issues. For example, why should a Premier have the right to call an election whenever he or she feels? Why don't we look at set terms and create some stability? Say, "If we're going to have a PR system, there are set terms, four years," and on the first of July or the first of December, or whenever we want to make it, there will be an election every four years. Everybody can plan for it, everybody knows, it's a set rule. Basically that's the way it would work.

Why don't we look at the way we finance campaigns? In the last general election, I think all members would agree, there were phenomenal amounts of money spent by third parties trying to support the Conservatives and electing them in order to put forward their agenda.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean):** Smart people.

**Mr Bisson:** Smart you, of course. You guys knew exactly what you were doing.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** What about the unions?

**Mr Bisson:** That's my point; that's exactly where I'm going. I don't think it's right that we should allow the corporate world or the union world to contribute money directly to campaigns, contribute money directly to parties, so that in the end they're able to exact their will on the political party. We all know that the Liberals and Conservatives get a huge amount of money from Bay Street. It tells me, as a layman, that if you get elected, either as a Conservative or a Liberal, you are somewhat beholden to Bay Street. Conversely, New Democrats, who are financed to a large extent by unions—the reality is that most of our money comes from private individuals—but as a single group—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** No, no, it is true. I invite anybody to come and take a look at what we fundraise. In our riding, our campaign was about \$55,000, of which about \$45,000 came from private individuals—about \$10,000 came from unions, no question.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** You too.

**Mr Bisson:** "You too," says Chris Stockwell. I won't even bite on that one.

But the point I make is, the Tories and the Liberals have the support of Bay Street, and when they form governments they tend to listen to Bay Street. Conversely, when New Democrats get elected—because, yes, we are a party of labour and we are supported by labour financially—we tend to listen to labour to a certain degree. I don't think that's the way we should allow democracy to work. I think we should take a look and

should say, "Shall we change the way we finance campaigns so that neither business nor labour is allowed to contribute and we have state-run elections?"

**1140**

Some people across the way will say, "State-run elections? Why should the taxpayers pay for elections?" Who do you think is paying for them now? If I give \$750 or \$1,000 to a campaign in Ontario, I get 75% back by way of a tax credit. The taxpayer is already subsidizing political parties and individual candidates by way of tax credits on the campaign.

What I would argue is, let's look at trying to set up a system that basically says campaigns will be run by the parties and the candidates, but they will have a set amount of money they can spend. Each candidate or party is apportioned, according to a certain formula, an amount of money they can spend as well as having the media report what's happening in the election in a non-partisan way, so that at the end of the day voters are not looking at glitzy ads but at the issues.

I say to the member who raises this bill this morning that I generally support your frustration. I have the same frustration. But I would argue that to fix this problem is not just to introduce this bill. I would argue that you have to change the entire political system. I would argue that you should be trying to work with us, the New Democrats, to find a way to get an all-party committee so we can look at how we can reform the electoral system and how we can reform elections generally so there truly is some democracy in Ontario and we're not in the situation where we find ourselves now.

In the few minutes I've got left, I want to make the point, because I think it is an important point to be made and, again, it speaks to the point of democracy: I said earlier that the Tories got elected with 42% of the vote and some 60% of the seats in the House. In the last election 42% of the vote was for the Conservatives and they got over 60% of the—

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** It was 45.

**Mr Bisson:** Forty-five. I don't care if it was 49, Chris. The point is, it wasn't 50, right? Thirty-eight for us; it wasn't right either. If you'd listen to the speech, you'd hear what I'm saying.

This morning I read in the paper that former mayor Crombie, who is now with the GTA, basically says the infrastructure of the cities around the GTA is starting to fall apart because there isn't the kind of support by the provincial government to make sure our cities develop properly and continue to grow in a way that's sustainable. He worries about where we are going and points the finger directly back at the government, saying, "You were wrong to download. You were wrong to do the things you did to municipalities."

It comes back to my point: both opposition parties, who made up 58% of the vote in the last election, and the same numbers in the previous election, would have stopped this kind of downloading, because both the opposition parties don't believe that downloading is a solution to dealing with financial problems. All it does is

transfer the problem on to a lower level of government which has no ability to deal with it.

Yes, the provincial government looks good because they got rid of the deficit. But all they've done is shove these problems on to the municipal government. Now you've got former mayor Crombie and others across this province saying that what you've done is created hell on wheels for municipalities and we're now starting to see the price. He goes on further: "We are watching the public school system being immeasurably hurt these days. It was the best system in North America but we can no longer rely and depend on it," he said, adding that the problem is the province. They are responsible, 'because it controls education funding.'" Again, his argument is that they're going in the wrong direction when it comes to what they've done in education.

My point is, under a PR system they would not have been able to do that without having the support of one of the two parties. I don't believe New Democrats, for sure, and the Liberals would have supported the direction this government is going.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm very pleased to join in the debate on the member from Toronto Centre-Rosedale's bill. Having just listened to the member from Timmins-James Bay speak about accountability, you have to look back prior to the 1995 election when the NDP was in government. The year prior, they sat for nine days, and he stands up and talks about accountability. That is totally laughable.

Let's talk about the next joke of the day, which is the bill before us. It's not about accountability. There is not one shred of evidence that this bill is needed. The member doesn't come here today with clean hands. He wants this to apply just to the executive council. He doesn't want it to apply to him. He doesn't want to deal with his own accountability. This is pure political puffery. This is childish.

Let's deal with what the bill is about. It says that if a minister of the crown doesn't attend 60% of the oral question period held during the session, \$100 is to be deducted from their salary for each occasion. Where did he get that figure from? That's got to be pure pie in the sky—60%. Where did that come from?

Then he goes on to say that you'll be deemed to be present if you're too ill to attend. What about the member's family? What about the spouse, and they're not able to attend? What if there's an emergency in the riding? What if something is happening to that individual's family or in his riding, something he has to deal with? He's basically going to be docked pay to deal with his own family emergency. That's a hell of a way to deal with things. I apologize for that comment, but being a family member, I can tell you that it is outrageous to dock someone's pay for dealing with a family emergency, just outrageous.

He says if the minister is absent from the oral question period for more than 20 minutes, and where did he get that figure? That is total nonsense—20 minutes. I guess he gets that from the Smitherman rules of conduct.

Then he goes on to show how ridiculous this piece of legislation is. He says the record of attendance should be provided by the minister. We're talking about self-policing here. Is he really serious about what he's trying to accomplish here? I don't think so.

**Interjection:** It's an honour system.

**Mr Tascona:** He calls it an honour system across the way.

The bottom line is that this bill is pure political puffery. There's no shred of evidence it's needed. It borders on childishness. The mean-spiritedness of it is, if you have a family member who is sick or you have an emergency to deal with, you're not covered and you get docked pay.

This bill hasn't been thought through and it's obvious why. It's pure political puffery. The member doesn't even want to be held accountable himself. It's for somebody else. Arguably, on its face, it's discriminatory, but we'll leave that for the public to decide.

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I'm very pleased to stand today to speak to the bill of the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. I'm going to bring my remarks to this House from my experience as a mother. My husband and I have four children. Certainly they understand that my role here is to defend the democratic process. We've always tried to have our children understand the importance of what we do here, because they spend a lot of time without their mother with them.

Today we're talking about An Act to amend the Executive Council Act respecting an institution of democracy in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I'm going to keep my remarks to that bill. I'm not going to get into, "You were here and I wasn't," or, "I was here and you weren't," although I have to say to anyone who would like to consider my attendance record, feel free to do so, feel free to comment on it, because I have a responsibility to account to the people I represent and to my family for my record here in this assembly.

The bill is very simple. For people who are watching the proceedings this morning, it's not very complicated. It simply indicates that members of the executive council should be in attendance 60% of the time.

1150

When we speak to our children about their responsibilities, whether it's at their place of work or at school, or when we talk about our responsibilities as parents in our place of work or our other commitments, we stress the importance of commitment, that very regularly there are choices we can make about where we are at any particular time. We should, I believe, be setting an example for the people we represent, the people in our families, that—

**Interjection.**

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** The Minister of Labour would like to interject. I find that interesting. He might learn something if he was quiet.

The example is that we should take our responsibilities very seriously and be here. Reference was made by the



member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford that if a member of his family was ill, that would have an impact and he might even have to pay for that. That would be regrettable. I suggest the member might bring forward an amendment to this that would enable consideration of that important fact. I also remind the members on the other side of the House that if that's an issue for which you don't think people who work should be penalized, that when members of their family are sick, they should continue to be paid, then I think they should extend that to all segments of our society.

I worked in retail and I had scheduled hours and I had no union. When I was sick or my kids were sick, I took time off and I wasn't paid. I do agree. If family members are sick, workers should not be penalized for that. I think it's a point well taken, but if that's the argument, then fine, let's consider it not just for the people in this House, but for the broader public as well.

The bottom line is—

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** What a Liberal.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** I'm so proud to be a Liberal, too. The bottom line is that this is about accountability. For me, it's about accountability. It's not about pointing at anyone on that side of the House or anyone on this side of the House and saying, "You're making the mark," or, "You're not making the mark." It's all about saying that if you are in a cabinet role in this Legislative Assembly, we believe it is reasonable to expect that you would be here in your role on behalf of the people of Ontario 60% of the time. That's all this bill is about, and as to the idea of the penalty, that's our example from you. You're ready to penalize everybody if they don't keep the law. If people who are ordered back to work don't keep the law, don't meet your expectation, you penalize them. If school boards don't follow your rules, you penalize them. So you need to look at the way you behave and the example you set and be prepared to live by the same standards.

That's my only point. It's very easy for me, in my riding, to defend supporting a bill that only expects accountability in this Legislative Assembly, and that's why I'm very happy to speak to it and support it today.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** I'm a little surprised that the member from Toronto Centre-Rosedale wants to go down this road. Nevertheless, let me say that I've had experience outside of politics and I want to point out that when I was an executive working for a company, I used to get on an airplane on the first of March and it felt like I didn't get off until the end of September. That was because my duties took me out of the office. A lot of people in the office felt that I was just away, slacking it, if you will, and I remember a number of my neighbours used to say, "What do the Rockies look like?" Well, all I did was see them from the plane and they looked like a big rock pile.

I'd like to relate this to the Premier. The Premier has duties as the head of the province that are much more onerous than what I had as an executive of a company. He has an obligation to visit as many citizens in Ontario as possible. He is not capable of meeting all those

citizens only in a period of intersession, whether it be in the winter or the summer. He has to get out and meet the citizens of the province.

Also he has to get around the world. It is an obligation, as the Premier of the province, to go around the world, ie China, as he did recently with the Prime Minister, because that encourages investment in the province, encourages jobs in the province, and Lord knows, we've done very well with that, haven't we? We have created 840,000 net new jobs since our government came to power. That's thanks in large part to the Premier.

The Premier has a very onerous responsibility of ensuring that people get off welfare. We have alleviated many of the citizens of Ontario from that chain, if you will. Some 575,000 people are now off welfare. I think that is very well done.

The Premier must get around. He must.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** He's at a fundraiser in St Catharines tonight.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Yes, I think he does go to fundraisers, and I think so do you. I say to the member from St Catharines, you go to fundraisers too. We all do.

The Premier works very hard to make sure that Ontario's working families get to keep more of their hard-earned money. We've had many—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I can't hear with the interruptions. I know that you're all going to want to be here a little later on. Please stay with us.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** The Leader of the Opposition, of course, also gets to go to England and Ireland. Does that mean that when he's not in the House, when he's away out there, he's not doing anything?

I'm a little bit surprised at the Liberals, because last week we had a vote on Bill 13, sending the students back to school in Toronto and in Windsor. I left my riding in Kitchener Centre to come down here and look out for the interests of the students in Toronto and in Windsor. To my figuring here, based on the legislative seating here, there are nine Liberals from Toronto in this Legislature, there are two from Windsor proper and four from the Windsor area in total. That's a total of 13 members. Of that 13, only four were here for the vote on third reading. There were a lot of government members from all over Ontario who were here who had more interest in the students in the city of Toronto and the city of Windsor than your own members did.

The member from Toronto Centre-Rosedale said, "I stand on principle and I'll vote in support of this legislation on the principle that kids can be back in the classrooms sooner. That's the most important principle that is at stake, in my opinion." He wasn't even here for the vote on second and third reading.

**The Acting Speaker:** We will not get into the specifics, not while either one of us is in this House. I'd ask you to withdraw that and continue if you want to.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I will withdraw it, but it is a matter of public record in Hansard.

I do wonder sometimes how they respond to their constituents. I missed four or five weeks last spring due to an

injury—a rather stupid injury but nevertheless it was a serious one—and I wasn't here. I heard from my constituents the amount of time that I wasn't here. They saw it. How do you respond?

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** This legislation allows me the chance to deal with the issue of accountability, which I think is important. I want to look at it in the breadth of the system under which we operate. The accountability of a government, to a very large extent, comes in this Legislative Assembly. My objection is very strong when governments, whatever governments they happen to be, do not adhere to the parliamentary calendar. My problem was that the House sat, I think—Mr Speaker, you could help me if I'm wrong on this—to December 20 of last year. It was not reconvened until April 19. The federal House was back in January. Can you imagine—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bradley:** And it's in session five days a week.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to be able to hear and I'd like you to stay, and if those two things are not compatible, then I'll solve the problem, believe me.

**Mr Bradley:** For a government to be accountable, I think it has to be accountable to the House. I was trying to imagine the absolute furor there would have been in the news media in Ottawa had the federal Liberal government announced that it was not going to bring the House back until April 19, not having sat since December 20. I suggest there would have been outrage, a furor. The National Post would have been running banner headlines seven days a week, or six days a week—they may not publish on Sunday. Mike Duffy, Tom Clark, the whole bunch of them would have been outraged by that happening. Here, nobody seems to mention it. Nobody in Ontario seemed to know this House wasn't sitting, because they could see the federal House in session. I think it's extremely important for governments to be accountable and to have the House in session. If you can put forward an argument that the people will accept in this House, and they see it on television or it's reported, then fine. I have no objection to that. But you must be accountable.

1200

The last time I had a chance to ask a question of the Premier was December 20 of the year 2000. The next time I had a chance to ask a question of the Premier—and he gave it to somebody else; I don't like that part—was May 1. So between December 20 and May 1, I did not have a chance, nor anybody else in this House, to ask the Premier a question. I don't think that's good for our democratic process. It's not as though the Premier doesn't know how to handle himself in the House. He's been here 20 years. It's not as though he should be afraid to be in the House or anything of that nature. It, to me, speaks of arrogance when whoever it happens to be who is accountable doesn't appear in the House to be accountable. That's an extremely important component.

I see an erosion happening because, first of all, the government has changed the rules of this Legislature to

suit itself. It is the majority; it changes the rules to grease the skids for government legislation. That has happened at least twice in this government, and the most draconian of changes have taken place under this government. What it has done is militate in favour of the Premier and the Premier's office essentially running the province—and perhaps some cabinet ministers, but even they do not have the same power, for instance, as Guy Giorno, who has the most power of all and is unelected.

You have been able to abuse public office through government advertising. I'm not going to use this as a prop, except to say this is the last one that came out. It's called "On." It cost over \$1 million for the people of Ontario. The Premier's photograph is in there. Everything is there to portray the government in the best possible light. To me, that is an abuse of the democratic system, allowing money to play a greater role in politics. You increase the amount people can contribute, you increase the amount people can spend in a campaign, and you exempt many expenditures. That gives the best break to the government in power or to those who have the most money to spend in the system. I think that is counterproductive to a good democratic system.

In addition to that, you have simply ignored the press gallery. They have an opportunity, when the House is in session, to be able to scrum the ministers much better than when the House is not in session.

So we have a concentration of power in the Premier's office. I think there must be much more accountability on the part of government.

**Mr Tilson:** This bill is about the Clerk taking attendance of members of the Executive Council. Some of the Liberal members, particularly the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London, have suggested that that even be extended to all members of this place.

I'm answerable to the people in my riding. I'm not answerable to you. I'm answerable to the people who elected me, and those are the people to whom I'm going to justify whether I'm here or not here.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Smitherman:** To the member that just spoke, I say, right back at you. I think I've touched a nerve here.

I'd like to thank all of those great presentations. The member from Scarborough—

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I'd ask the member to keep his remarks within what I would consider parliamentary, and I don't consider that parliamentary.

**Mr Smitherman:** The members from Elgin-Middlesex-London, Timmins-James Bay, Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, Kitchener Centre and St Catharines: thank you. You've helped to make my point. Especially to the government members, I agree. I agree with much of what you've said, which is that we all ought to be held to a higher level of accountability. I stand in answer to the member who spoke last and say that I agree. I'm making the same point. If we have done anything in the course of this hour this morning, we have helped to highlight the fact that we all need to be held accountable, but you've missed a very



important point. The point is that for that one hour a day called question period, ministers of the crown, who are given more money and more responsibility, are asked to be here to be held to account for the responsibility that they have been granted on behalf of their province. That is the essence of this bill.

The members opposite talk about holding all people accountable, they reference votes that I have missed, and I'm happy. I'm happy to have my constituents be made more aware of that. I would make the point to the member who spoke that they have missed the entire point, which is that cabinet ministers have more responsibility and accordingly more is asked of them. That one hour, that sacred one hour called question period, has been diminished as a result of the deliberate actions of this government.

Anyone who's been following this debate knows, Ontario's working families know and you all know, that when it comes to attending his duties at question period the Premier of this province has a failing grade, and this bill seeks to improve that.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is out of order and I ask you to withdraw it.

**Mr Smitherman:** Mr Speaker, no one else who made comments like that was out of order or was asked to withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker:** I ask the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale to withdraw that comment.

**Mr Smitherman:** Happily, sir.

**The Acting Speaker:** No, I just ask you to say, "I withdraw," or—

**Mr Smitherman:** Withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time for private members' business has expired.

## HORSE RIDING SAFETY ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES CAVALIERS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will deal first with ballot item number 3. Mrs Molinari has moved second reading. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This is the first item. We will deal with the voting of it after.

### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will deal now with ballot item number 4. Mr Smitherman has moved ballot item number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll call in the members. I'd like to remind you this will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1207 to 1212.*

## HORSE RIDING SAFETY ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES CAVALIERS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mrs Molinari has moved second reading of Bill 12. All those in favour will please rise until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Gill, Raminder	Molinari, Tina R.
Amott, Ted	Gravelle, Michael	Munro, Julia
Baird, John R.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Mushinski, Marilyn
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Newman, Dan
Bartolucci, Rick	Hastings, John	O'Toole, John
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hoy, Pat	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bradley, James J.	Hudak, Tim	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Jackson, Cameron	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Johns, Helen	Phillips, Gerry
Chudleigh, Ted	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Klees, Frank	Smitherman, George
Clement, Tony	Kormos, Peter	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kwinter, Monte	Stewart, R. Gary
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Stockwell, Chris
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	Tascona, Joseph N.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Dombrowsky, Leona	Martel, Shelley	Tsubouchi, David H.
Duncan, Dwight	Martiniuk, Gerry	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Wilson, Jim
Galt, Doug	McGuinty, Dalton	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gerretsen, John	McLeod, Lyn	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Miller, Norm	Young, David

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 66; the nays are 0.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered to the committee of the whole?

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** I move that Bill 12 be sent to the standing committee on justice and social policy.

**The Acting Speaker:** Agreed? It is agreed.

The doors will be open for 30 seconds.

### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CONSEIL EXÉCUTIF

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mr Smitherman has moved second reading of Bill 21. All those in favour will please rise until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Dombrowsky, Leona	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	McGuinty, Dalton
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve

Caplan, David  
Cleary, John C.  
Colle, Mike  
Crozier, Bruce  
Di Cocco, Caroline

Kennedy, Gerard  
Kormos, Peter  
Kwinter, Monte  
Levac, David  
Marchese, Rosario

Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Smitherman, George

It also reminds us of the tragic loss we had this week of a great friend of Toronto and of all of us who knew him in the old city of York, Captain Patrick Carey. What a loss at such a young age. Let's not forget.

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Baird, John R.  
Barrett, Toby  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Brad  
Clement, Tony  
Coburn, Brian  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Galt, Doug  
Gilchrist, Steve  
Gill, Raminder  
Guzzo, Garry J.  
Hardeman, Ernie

Hastings, John  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Cameron  
Johns, Helen  
Klees, Frank  
Marland, Margaret  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Mazzilli, Frank  
Miller, Norm  
Molinari, Tina R.  
Munro, Julia  
Mushinski, Marilyn  
Newman, Dan

O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Spina, Joseph  
Stewart, R. Gary  
Stockwell, Chris  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Tilson, David  
Tsubouchi, David H.  
Wettlaufer, Wayne  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth  
Wood, Bob  
Young, David

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 28; the nays are 39.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now leave the chair. The House resumes at 1:30.

*The House recessed from 1220 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FIRE IN TORONTO

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** I want to talk about the devastating fire that occurred in my riding yesterday at Dufferin and Lawrence at the new Liberty Walk townhouse project, where 180 new townhouses went up in flames. It was one of the worst fires in recent memory in Toronto. It's also a terrible shame and a terrible loss, not only of \$20 million and 180 homes, but also a tragic loss of people's hard work and hope.

These new townhouses were welcomed by the community. They were affordable and were an infill development that replaced fallow industrial land, exactly the type of new housing my community and the city of Toronto needs. Not too ago I was there at the groundbreaking with great hope and celebration, and I was there yesterday in sadness watching the loss. It was heartbreaking to see all this hard work, time and dreams go up in smoke. Fortunately, because of the great work of Toronto Fire Services under Chief Speed, there was no loss of life and injuries were limited. I want to take this opportunity to thank the 160 members of the Toronto fire department who helped put out this massive fire at great personal risk. It takes a tragedy like this to remind us all that we should not take for granted the importance of fire services and keeping our homes and workplaces safe.

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** In early January, Minister of Transportation David Turnbull announced the investment of \$550,000 to assist more than 100 community groups across our province in an effort to target aggressive and unsafe driving behaviour. The aggressive driving community support program provides funding to local, regional and provincial road user safety groups in support of education and awareness campaigns that address aggressive driving at the community level.

Yesterday evening, I attended the official launch of the Oro-Medonte community policing committee's mobile radar board. A radar board is used in designated areas across the township. It is set up on a daily basis by the OPP and is left for a specific time. As drivers approach the board, it records and displays the actual speed of the vehicle. The board doesn't require the attendance of an officer. It is used to measure traffic volume, and it acts as a deterrent for those speeding on township and regional roads. The project cost to the Oro-Medonte community policing committee was just over \$10,000, with the province contributing approximately 50%.

I'd like to congratulate Joan Fitzgerald, chairperson of the Oro-Medonte community policing committee, and all of her volunteer committee members; Mayor Ian Beard and the township of Oro-Medonte council and staff; John Warkentin, regional planner, road user safety branch of MTO; and Staff Sergeant Len Hassberger of the OPP for all their hard work and fundraising efforts in seeing this project completed. I believe the aggressive driving community support program is an overwhelming success.

### ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** It is with great honour I rise on behalf of, I believe, all members of this House, particularly in our caucus, to commemorate the May 3 Constitution Day, an important day not just for Polish Canadians, but for the entire people of Canada.

I would like to remark that about an hour ago this flag was raised in front of this Legislature in appropriate commemoration of the efforts toward freedom that have been made from the Polish nation under the May 3 Constitution auspices.

I'd like to recognize for all of us here today the contribution that has been made toward freedom, toward a stronger Canadian society and a stronger country in Poland by the people who have been part of this strong and proud Canadian Polish community. Today, we have with us Professor Andrej Mrozewski, chair of Canadian Polish Congress Council in Sudbury; his wife Janina



Mrozewski; Wojciech Olbrycht, who is with the Polish Veterans Association; and also a number of people from similar army formations: Krzysztof Szywłowski, Marc Ostrowski, Vera Wiktorczyk, Władysław Jagiellcz, Jerzy Burski, Bolesław Rybka, Walter Szymczak, Bolesław Chamot, Mieczysław Szczeciński.

As well, we have Maria Taborski, with the Polish National Union; other members of the Polish National Union; Marian Pietruzewski, with the Polonia brass band; Krystyna Krywoj, Mihail Michalski and Bogumil Nowinowski.

I would like on behalf of all members of this Legislature to pay appropriate tribute to the Polish community in their efforts made here in Canada.

#### FISHERMEN'S MEMORIAL

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** Commercial fishing has been a way of life for many in Port Dover for over 150 years, and most families have had at least one person working in the industry. Many have worked on the docks or in the fish plants, and hundreds of others have cast their nets along the lake.

Fishermen and their families understood the dangers of the unpredictable waters of Lake Erie, but carried on. Last May, I attended a ceremony in my hometown of Port Dover where the eastern Lake Erie fishermen's memorial was unveiled. The monument features three fishermen pulling a net. With this piece, Waterford sculptress Kathryn Hogg truly captured the essence of those involved in the commercial fishing industry. Most important, the monument celebrates the heritage of Ontario's fishing towns and pays tribute to those who have lost their lives on the lake.

This month the project will be complete with the laying of the last 50 bricks.

This memorial would not have become a reality had it not been for the efforts of local residents Rosemary Murphy and Dorothy Hoskins. Together, the pair held walk-a-thons, draws, a fish fry, a golf tournament and a concert to ensure their longtime wish would become reality. I commend and congratulate both of these women for working so hard. They have created a tribute that is so important to fishing families along the lakes.

#### ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** The Ontario government's investment per capita on culture places it last among the 10 provinces. In 1996-97, the federal government spent \$103 in Ontario per capita, municipal government spent \$54 per capita in Ontario, and the provincial government spent \$39 per capita in Ontario.

A report for the Arts in the Community Task Force states that arts and cultural activities in the school system have been slashed. We have fewer opportunities for students to participate in music, in theatre, in art, because the Harris neo-Conservatives see these educational disciplines as frills.

The foundation of development for culture begins with accessibility in our schools. Education in the arts helps our society achieve broader education, economic and social goals. Ninety-two per cent of Ontarians say the arts enrich the quality of their lives. Investment in the arts projects an image of a modern, innovative and creative province in the global marketplace.

The Ontario Liberal caucus is a strong public voice which believes in the tangible and intangible values of culture and heritage for working families in our communities and across this province. The federal government has had the courage to reinvest in culture. Where is the provincial portion of cultural investment in Ontario?

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Sing Tao Daily is a Chinese-language daily newspaper published here in the city of Toronto, very profitable, you should understand, which in no small part helps to explain why Torstar Corp purchased the majority ownership of it back in April 1998.

Sing Tao Daily's 110 workers organized into a collective bargaining unit. They organized a union at their workplace, CEP local 87, SONG, and attempted to negotiate a first contract. What they sought was some modest parity with similar community-based newspapers also owned by Torstar Corp.

1340

Well, here we are, months and months later, and yesterday morning those workers picketed the King Edward Hotel, where Torstar Corp was holding its annual general meeting, to protest the racism of Torstar Corp, because Toronto Star John Honderich and his Liberal friends seem to think it's OK to pay Chinese-speaking workers less than you pay English-language workers. John Honderich and his Liberal colleagues at Torstar Corp seem to think it's OK to try to crush workers and smash unions. Well, New Democrats were there with the workers from Sing Tao Daily, members of CEP local 87, or SONG. Howard Hampton and I attended on behalf of this caucus and New Democrats across this province who are proud to stand with workers, proud to stand with trade unionists against people who call themselves Liberals but who act like Tories, people who want to smash unions and smash the lowest-paid workers in this province.

#### BRICK STREET SCHOOL

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** We have with us today 45 students from Brick Street School in the great riding of London West.

Brick Street School, part of the Thames Valley District School Board, is located on Commissioners Road in London. Commissioners Road ran from Windsor to Hamilton in the 1800s and was used as a stagecoach route. There has been a school building in the immediate vicinity since 1817. Brick Street School was built in 1954. Commissioners Road was nicknamed "Brick

Street" because of the 16 brickyards that existed in the area many years ago. None of them remains today.

On the front lawn of the school is an old school bell. It was made to be used for the original 1817 school and now sits in a small bell tower structure on the front lawn of the school. The Brick Street School logo features the bell and structure.

Brick Street School has approximately 380 students from JK to Grade 6.

The visit today is part of Education Week activities. This year's theme is "Excellence in school performance, excellence in student learning."

I know that among this group there are at least one future Premier, three cabinet ministers and at least two maverick MPPs.

I ask the members of the assembly to join with me in welcoming the Grade 5 students, teachers and chaperones from the classes of Shirley Parkin-Bobier and Chris Vertz of Brick Street School.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** I stand today to offer congratulations to Durham region council. Last night Durham region council sent a stern rebuke to the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Education, who have been lobbying aggressively for the municipal taxpayer in Durham region to pay for hospital construction. Last night, Durham region council, led by a variety of mayors like John Mutton from Durham, Nancy Diamond from Oshawa and Steve Parish from Ajax, said no. They said no to being the tax collector for Mike Harris's downloading, and they said no to being the tax collector for Mike Harris's chronic underfunding of hospital expansion in the greater Toronto area.

Mayor Parish said, "The province is responsible for health care and we should be working together to urge the province to fund it properly." "Hear, hear," we say to that.

Mayor Diamond said, "This would be the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back," as she argued against this imposition of further tax on the municipal taxpayer in Durham region.

We want to applaud those courageous souls on Durham region council for standing up. We know that those two government ministers from Durham region lobbied aggressively to ensure that this would go through, and Durham region council said no. They said no to them, even though the province has imposed more costs on hospitals than ever before. They know that \$100 million is beyond the capacity of the Durham residential property tax base. Hospital funding, downloading, these are the issues that came home to roost last night in Durham region, and Durham region council said no.

#### EVENTS IN YORK REGION

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** I rise in the House today to speak about an event that is going to take place next week in my riding of York North. The York Region

Volunteer Summit is a two-day event on May 7 and 8. Day 1 will feature a presentation of Ontario's Promise in the morning, followed by a student summit in the afternoon. Day 2 will include representatives from business, government, community agencies, citizens' groups and student bodies.

The York region community summit is our opportunity to explore the challenges and opportunities affecting voluntary action in York region. The Ontario's Promise component of the summit will feature corporate and community partners from York region.

Ontario's Promise is all about our five promises to the children of Ontario: a healthy start, an adult that cares, safe places to learn and grow, the tools to succeed and a chance to make a difference.

Speaking about being an agency of promise will be Rob Black from 4-H Ontario, Kathryn Henderson of Big Brothers of York, and Curt Harnett of the Sport Alliance of Ontario.

In my riding of York North there are thousands of volunteers who donate their time to enhance the quality of our lives. It is my hope that the York Region Volunteer Summit will encourage all sectors of our community to work together to make York region the very best community in Ontario.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### AFFORDABLE HOUSING INCENTIVES ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 SUR LES STIMULANTS AU LOGEMENT À PRIX ABORDABLE

Mr Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to create affordable housing by enabling municipalities to offer incentives for development and re-development of properties / *Projet de loi 37, Loi créant des logements à prix abordable en permettant aux municipalités d'offrir des stimulants pour l'aménagement ou le réaménagement de biens-fonds.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** Once again, in the absence of leadership by the Harris government, it falls to Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party to provide that leadership, to provide a positive vision for Ontario's working families.

Section 111 of the Municipal Act prohibits a municipality from granting any financial assistance to any enterprise. The Affordable Housing Incentives Act creates an exception to this rule, enabling municipalities to provide financial assistance to an affordable housing project in that municipality.

This bill allows municipalities to define what types of affordable housing projects will qualify for assistance,



and a local board can be established by the municipality to administer the program to provide financial assistance to affordable housing projects. I urge all members of the House to support this bill.

#### RENT FREEZE ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 SUR LE GEL DES LOYERS

Mr Marchese moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 38, An Act to amend the Tenant Protection Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 38, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la protection des locataires.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** The bill freezes the amount of residential rates for a period of two years. Notices and applications for an increase to take effect after the bill passes will have no effect. No rent increase will be permitted on renting to a new tenant. Landlords will be required to give tenants a statement certifying the amount of rent last charged for the unit. Landlords who give false statements or fail to give the statement will be subject to prosecution. Landlords will no longer be permitted to increase the rent charged for the maximum rent allowed when part VI of the Tenant Protection Act, 1997, came into force. Finally, the bill establishes a rent registry. Landlords are required to file a statement with the registry that sets out the lawful rent for each rental unit to which the act applies.

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT

##### (RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE), 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (AUGMENTATION DU SALAIRE MINIMUM)

Mr Hampton moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to raise the minimum wage to ensure that everyone shares in Ontario's prosperity / Projet de loi 39, Loi augmentant le salaire minimum pour que toute la population puisse bénéficier de la prospérité de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The leader of the third party for a short statement?

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** This bill will do something for the hundreds of thousands of women and men struggling to support a family on take-home pay of less than \$250 a week. It will raise the minimum wage in Ontario to \$7.50 an hour, the first increase in our minimum wage in six years. It will put us on par with our major trading partner. It is a simple step that will give working people a chance. It's the right thing to do, and it's long overdue.

1350

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### WELFARE REFORM

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Six years ago, the Mike Harris government set out to reform welfare in the province of Ontario. We wanted to move more Ontarians from welfare to work. The problem was that while Ontario was the most prosperous province in the country, we also had the highest number of people per capita on welfare.

Under the old money-for-nothing welfare system, case workers had become cheque dispensers. They weren't able to offer welfare recipients the support they needed to help break the welfare trap. When we were first elected, we wanted to turn the welfare system from a trap into a trampoline. We wanted to create a welfare system that helped people get the skills and experience they needed to move into paid employment.

I'm happy to report that our government has had some success. As of March this year, more than 578,000 people have left the welfare rolls since we were first elected in 1995. But our work is not done. With more than 437,000 people still on welfare, it's clear that we have more to do.

In the throne speech on April 19, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario told this House that the government will announce details to help get people off welfare and into jobs. That's why I rise today to share our government's five-point action plan to continue to move forward with welfare reform. When a prospective employer calls with a job offer, we want people to be able to say, "Yes, I'm ready." Our government will implement our five-point action plan to see that Ontario Works becomes even more responsive to the needs of recipients. I want to share with the members here today our five-point action plan.

We recognize that literacy is a basic yet important skill in today's marketplace. We know that if you can't read the job ads, it can be tough to get off welfare. We agree with the Human Resources Development Canada report that says lack of adequate literacy skills is the number one barrier to employment. Already through Ontario Works, thousands of people are getting literacy training. For example, Ontario Works participant Barb Muir, from near Kingston, has been getting help from the North Frontenac literacy program. She says it's helping make a real difference for her in her life: "I now have the confidence and self-assurance to speak and demonstrate my learning skills to others. Ontario Works is not something I chose to be on. However, it has allowed me, through participation in upgrading and community placements, to move on to another career with confidence and with pride in myself."

It's stories like this one that confirm our government is on the right track. But I don't think we can become complacent. That's why in our Blueprint we promised to provide remedial training for any welfare recipient who can't pass a basic language and math test. While some may not agree, our government believes that an important part of many of our welfare reforms is the mandatory component. If a welfare recipient can't pass a basic language and math test, they will be offered help. If they refuse help, they will have made themselves ineligible for welfare in Ontario. The government will help welfare recipients who struggle with reading, writing and math by introducing mandatory literacy testing and training. Taxpayers want to help; our government wants to help. As well, we believe people on welfare have a responsibility to take advantage of those programs and to help themselves get job-ready.

The next critical piece of our government's five-part action plan is the continued expansion of Ontario Works placements. We recognize that sometimes the greatest barrier to employment is simply a lack of experience. That's why we're—

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock, please.

**Mr Caplan:** I refer to section 35(d) of the standing orders, where it says that after any policy statement during ministerial statements, the minister "shall"—the operative word—table a compendium of background information. All week, we have had statements by ministers, and yet none of this kind of information has been tabled with this Legislature.

I seek from you, Speaker, what the redress and what the penalty is for ministers who have, in my view, and in the view, I believe, of the official opposition, not followed the standing orders of this place. I would seek your guidance and your ruling.

**The Speaker:** I thank the member for his point of order and I would ask the Minister of Community and Social Services whether indeed this is a policy statement.

**Hon Mr Baird:** I'm not sure, Mr Speaker. It's a statement outlining some actions the government intends to proceed and follow forward with. I would be very pleased to table a copy of our action plan with you at the end of my statement.

**The Speaker:** I'm afraid that's too late. You won't be able to continue. If it is indeed a policy statement, you need to table that per the standing orders, which are very thorough. What I would ask you to do is to follow those procedures and then we can proceed. I apologize to everyone for the inconvenience and I thank the member for his point of order.

#### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we begin question period, I want to let all the members know that this is the last day for this wonderful group of pages we

have. I would ask that you join me in thanking this first group for their efforts on our behalf.

It is now time for question period.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We were told the Minister of Health would be present in the House today. We were not informed that he would be absent. If he's present, we would like to ask a question of the Minister of Health.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** It's my understanding the Minister of Health is on his way and should be here very shortly. My apologies, Mr Speaker. If they want to stand down that particular question—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** What you may want to do is stand it down. I believe he is on his way.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Here he is.

**The Speaker:** As we speak. We probably know who gets the first question, then.

#### TUITION FEES

**Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor West):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals would like to know if yesterday, after the Premier finished answering the question of Dalton McGuinty regarding the medical school students who were here in the House, you, as Minister of Health, pulled him aside and said, "Smarten up. What kind of a kiss-off was that to give to medical students who are experiencing some real financial difficulties getting through the system and becoming medical doctors?"

Yesterday in this House he said some quite unbelievable things, but specifically we'd like to know if you agree with the Premier in his very much of a rebuff to medical students, and that medical school today is becoming a place where only rich families can consider sending their young people. I'd like to know if you agree with the Premier, or did you pull him aside yesterday and tell him to smarten up?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** In answer to the question, I do agree with the Premier that we, the Mike Harris government, have created an unprecedented level of student support by virtue of our matching of bursaries and student support in terms of the way we are revamping and seek to revamp OSAP. Our position is that if you're Conrad Black's daughter, you can pay your own way.

**Mrs Papatello:** We are talking about working families in Ontario who want their children to have every opportunity, including those who do not have the bank account of Conrad Black. That's what Ontario Liberals stand for in this House.

Yesterday the Premier, in answer to Dalton McGuinty's question, suggested these students can pay back their



loans within the first few months of working. We know these university grads get their bachelor or honours degree after three or four years of school and then apply to medical school already with \$28,000 in loans.

1400

The OMA confirmed for us today that first-year residents in fact make about \$30,000 after tax in those first few years of working, that debt service, interest and principal costs are \$14,000 on a standard \$100,000 loan. Minister of Health, do you agree with the Premier when he stood in the House yesterday and said that these medical school students can pay back their loans in the first few months of working?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I agree with the Premier when he indicated to this House, which is a verifiable number, that currently our government—the government you so deride—provides more than \$22,000 per year per student enrolled in our province's medical programs. That's what we do now. If you're asking me, should we spend an extra dollar on that program—\$22,000 already—rather than spending it on other forms of health care reform that we have to do, my vote is for other forms of health care reform that we have to do.

**Mrs Pupatello:** We're quite amazed to hear the comments from the Minister of Health. Do you honestly think the Ontario government is prepared to just make allowances for Conrad Black's daughter to go through medical school? We're talking about Ontario's working families, and what we know is that what the Premier said yesterday in the House is that for tuition and ancillary fees, they can get all the help they need from universities. Now you're saying you agree with this. What the OMA tells us is that the CIBC alone carries \$100 million in debt for medical students. That's just one bank and that's obviously in addition to OSAP or help from Ontario universities. Are you still going to stand by your Premier when he gives these medical students short shrift, when yesterday he literally gives them the kiss-off and doesn't understand for a moment that Ontario working families are having trouble sending their students to medical school? He said a number of things yesterday.

Tell us in the House today that as the Minister of Health, facing doctor shortages in 109 communities—to date you have open resident spaces for medical students who want to practise family medicine because those students aren't selecting family medicine, so that you are having real problems today in our system—you could honestly stand by and agree with the Premier?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I have four million answers to that question because \$4 million is the amount of free tuition we allocate as part of the Mike Harris team's budget to ensure that medical students who seek to practise in under-serviced areas get free tuition. Did you hear me? Free tuition. That is the government's policy. If you are paying more in tuition than \$4,500 plus ancillary fees, we help you out. We have the bursaries; we have the loans; we have the grants; we are there for you. We are there for the medical students who need the help.

But if you're asking me whether the rich and exclusive should get free tuition or freer tuition in Mike Harris's

Ontario, I don't think so. I don't think that's a proper use of government money and I think we have to offer the leadership to make those tough decisions that clearly they know nothing about on that side of the House.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** My question is for the Deputy Premier. It wasn't just Durham regional council yesterday that was added in repudiating your government for its inadequate funding for municipalities in the greater Toronto area. We also have David Crombie, a former mayor of Toronto, a Tory and a trusted adviser, who in releasing the Vital Signs project, a partnership of academia and government working on government statistics, said, "It is no longer possible for federal and provincial governments to decide they're not going to be responsible for urban issues."

I'm wondering if you can address—are you having difficulty hearing me? I just read a quote from David Crombie. Yesterday he said, "It is no longer possible for federal and provincial governments to decide they're not going to be responsible for urban issues." Can you tell us what your government is going to do to address what happened yesterday in Durham region, repudiating your government's funding formula for hospitals, and what you're going to do in response to the Vital Signs project announced yesterday?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** As you know, there was a major issue in Durham region that the regional councillors, as I understand it, dealt with yesterday. I regret that there's this quite remarkable difference of opinion with respect to the capital needs of the Rouge Valley Health System and the Lakeridge health system in Durham region. I've heard the views of some of the councillors but I've also heard the views of the members of the board and the CEOs of the hospitals.

As you know, there is a practice in the regions outside of Durham region to contribute some capital funding to support capital expansion of hospitals. The provincial government has committed more than \$200 million to those projects in Durham region.

These are difficult issues for local hospital officials and local councillors to deal with. I understand the result yesterday was negative in terms of additional funding for the hospitals, and that's something that will have to be resolved in the local region.

**Mr Smitherman:** I see, Deputy Premier, that you've chosen to focus only on the Durham aspect of the question I asked. I find it interesting that you take this nonchalant approach in answering the question. It speaks little to the efforts you made, which were repudiated.

I gather you, along with those hospitals, have been involved as a lobbyist in an attempt to get regional councillors in Durham to support the imposition of extraordinary taxes on local taxpayers.

In addition to having been turned back in your attempt to pass your responsibilities and the broad base of the

provincial tax-gathering capacity to municipalities, we also have this Vital Signs report that was released yesterday, speaking to the vitality of the greater Toronto area.

I think you would understand that the economic prospects for the greater Toronto area are funded in large measure on quality-of-life measurements. This has always been Toronto's economic advantage. I'm wondering what efforts you're taking specifically to address the concerns raised in this report to get back to the point where the municipalities in the greater Toronto area are providing an enhanced, rather than diminished, quality of life for their residents.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** I must say I find the quality of life in the area of the province that I represent, Durham region, to be a very high quality of life and I think my constituents feel that we have a very high quality of life in Whitby and Ajax.

Having said that, there are important issues surrounding smart growth, our government's policy with respect to planned growth in Ontario. There are important issues relating to the 400-series highways; important issues relating to various types of transit—rail, light rail and other types of transit. There are issues relating to other types of infrastructure, as the member opposite, I'm sure, appreciates.

A number of those issues of course are vital, not only to urban life in the greater Toronto area but in the entire Golden Horseshoe. Not being too Toronto-centred, if I may say that, these issues also affect Kitchener-Waterloo, Barrie, Orillia, Peterborough, Cobourg, Port Hope and St Catharines. Many of these issues are matters that we've been considering and listening to in budget preparation. The budget is next Wednesday.

**Mr Smitherman:** We heard a lengthy answer from the Deputy Premier about his capacity to listen and we've heard that from the Minister of Transportation and other ministers of the crown, trying to gather some energy and steam behind these hollow words of "smart growth." But you said nothing in your answer except to say that quality-of-life issues for residents in Ajax are high.

I would turn your attention to the matter of transit and road gridlock and to the matter of yesterday's rejection of municipal taxpayers being forced to pay a disproportionate and unwieldy share of capital funding for hospitals. What in specific terms are you prepared to do to reverse this trend toward more gridlock on our roads and toward hospitals with too big a portion of their capital costs being borne on the backs of local property taxpayers?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** I think the honourable member probably does know—if he doesn't know, he should know—that many municipalities in Ontario contribute to capital funding of hospitals. So this is not a blanket situation, as he seems to be trying to portray it with respect to Durham region.

Having said that, traffic concerns, transit concerns, GO Transit concerns, gridlock concerns are very important to the quality of life of all of us who live in Ontario.

These are issues not only in the greater Toronto area but in the Golden Horseshoe area and also, quite frankly, in the Ottawa area, the Kitchener-Waterloo area, the Hamilton area, and some gateway issues in Niagara and also in the Windsor area. We're reviewing all of these issues. I certainly have heard a great deal about them as part of our extensive consultations in preparation for the provincial budget. Stay tuned for May 9.

1410

## AIR QUALITY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. I'm asking you to put lives ahead of profits and order Ontario Power Generation to stop exporting dirty, coal-fired power during smog alerts. On hot, smog alert days like today, people all over the United States crank up their air conditioners. They force up the demand for power, and thus the price for power. Then Ontario Power Generation cranks up their coal-fired stations to export more power. Will you use your authority to order Ontario Power Generation to stop the export of dirty, coal-fired power to the United States on hot, smog alert days like today?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** As the leader of the opposition knows, we have taken steps already to ensure that we reduce the emissions into the air. We have indicated that Lakeview needs to stop burning coal by April 2005. We also have put in place reductions in emissions for nitrous oxides and sulphur oxides.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, the Lakeview issue is important, but this is a separate issue. It's a simple story: on hot, smog alert days, people in the United States crank up their air conditioners. The demand for power goes up, the price goes up and Ontario Power Generation cranks up their coal-fired stations to feed that market. What's the result? More smog, right here. During one smog alert day last May, Ontario Power Generation cranked up its coal-fired generating stations to an extent that it was equal to putting 800,000 more smog-spewing cars on the road right here. You've got the power to prevent that, Minister. Will you do it?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** As the leader of the third party well knows, 50% of all air pollution in this province comes from the United States. Having said that, as you know, we very successfully were able to intervene in a Supreme Court case that forced some of the other American states to move forward with their environmental plans, and eventually we will see a reduction of about 20% in this province.

Having said that, we're still accountable for the other 50%. As the leader of the third party knows, we have been moving forward to take the appropriate steps. We started with the anti-smog plan. We have moved forward with Drive Clean. Most recently, as I indicated to you, we have moved forward to cap coal burning at Lakeview. By the way, that's a decision your government could



have made as well, but you didn't take any steps whatsoever to do so.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Final supplementary.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** The reality is that air pollution has got worse under your government. That's a fact; it's in the records. We are asking you to do something today. You can do something now. There are long-term solutions that we bring to your attention time and time again, like bringing in our transportation trust fund. Funding public transportation needs to be done again. But what we are asking you to do today is to save lives now. So I'm going to put it to you again: will you protect people's lungs from smog and tell the OPG not to export coal-fired power during smog alerts like today, or is it more important to you to let people suffer so the OPG can make greater profits? Minister, which is it?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I refer this to the Minister of Energy.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** We do take into consideration the air quality when running our coal-fired plants and we do curtail their use during smog alert days. The Honourable Minister of the Environment is also quite correct: most of the air pollution comes from the 205 coal plants that are in our air shed in the United States. We have five coal plants. Today our emissions standards and the tough new environmental standards the Minister of the Environment announced—but even today, before those standards come into effect, we have the cleanest electrons in North America, a record that this government is proud of.

### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** We'll try again with the Minister of Energy. You told us last week that your dirty deal to sell off Ontario's electricity system wouldn't result in massive exports to the United States. You said there weren't the transmission lines to do that. But then US Vice-President Dick Cheney came here this week and said he'll build the transmission lines so that our power can be sold in the United States. Then your Premier tells us that he thinks that's a fine idea. In fact, he thinks it would be OK to build more nuclear plants in Ontario to feed the American market.

Minister, I want you to tell us and the people of Ontario again that a massive sell-off of Ontario's electricity generation capacity to the United States and corporations there isn't going to happen and that it won't increase the price Ontarians have to pay for power.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** The only plant we've put into the hands of another company is the Bruce power plant, which is now owned by British Energy, which is Bruce power and the Power Workers' Union and the other union, which is the society of electrical professionals. So if the honourable member doesn't think that's a good deal, then he should say so and should talk to his union counterparts, who

have an equity position, who want the jobs and who agree it's a very positive step that we've taken. The people of the Bruce Peninsula and the Bruce riding think it's a very positive step we've taken. Hundreds and hundreds of jobs have been saved in that area.

Yes, we will sell excess power to the United States, as his government did, as the Liberals did and as Bill Davis did when the plants were built. The people of Ontario will be looked after first, and the excess power will be sold.

**Mr Hampton:** You tried to tell us last week that there are rules which would prevent our electricity from being sold off for a higher price in the United States and that Ontario consumers would be protected. We talked with officials in your ministry who said that's just not the case. There is no authority to prevent that. Then the Premier told us here yesterday that he's all in favour of massive exports. So if you're going to sell the stations, if Ontario doesn't own them any more, if private corporations own them and your Premier is in favour of massive exports and the Americans want to build the transmission lines and those private corporations want to sell it in the United States so they can get a higher price and more profit, who is going to look after the consumers in Ontario? Your Premier isn't, the Americans aren't and you don't have the power to do it. How are you going to stop power prices in Ontario from rising to the price they're now at in New York—doubling, tripling? How are you going to prevent that?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Mr Speaker, he's the only one in the province who seems to have these theories. He's an island unto himself with respect to this debate, and he simply doesn't listen to all the answers I've provided over the last three weeks.

Let me give you the purpose of the Energy Competition Act and one of the responsibilities of the independent market operator. By the way, if Mr Cheney wants to build hydro lines, he'll have to get a licence not only from the independent market operator but also from Floyd Laughren of the Ontario Energy Board. Ontarians will decide how much power goes to the United States and how much we'll participate in a continental energy policy that Jean Chrétien is spouting with Mr Bush. By the way, I, as chair of Canada's energy ministers, have yet to be consulted on this whole scheme.

The act is clear. I don't know what officials in my ministry—you probably asked them one question and me another. That's what you usually do, Mr Hampton. It says one of the purposes is "to protect the interests of consumers with respect to prices and the reliability and quality of electricity service." In the—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock for a moment, please.

**Mr Hampton:** Could I ask for unanimous consent for the minister to read the next paragraph, please?

**The Speaker:** We're not getting into that.

I do beg the indulgence of the House: earlier on the point of order when the Minister of Community and Social Services rose, I understood him to say the compendium will be coming. Apparently, he did have it in his hands and did say he had it, so we are going to allow the statement to continue. He had 16 minutes and 41 seconds. Then of course, we will have the replies from the critics as well. The clock will revert. We're keeping the time on the clock.

1420

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Speaker: With the greatest of respect to you, I understand what you've just said and I appreciate the misunderstanding. But with respect, sir, it's my submission to you that the Speaker does not have unilateral authority to alter the course of events of the day.

I appreciate what you said and I appreciate, with the greatest respect, that perhaps it was a misunderstanding, and I appreciate quite frankly that this puts the minister in a difficult position. However, I repeat to you, sir, that the Speaker is bound by the standing orders just as we are. There is nothing, in my submission, in the standing orders—and I appreciate what the Speaker is trying to do and I can't suggest that it's unfair in and of itself. But I put to you that the Speaker in this assembly has no remedial power or residual power to unilaterally do what the Speaker is proposing to do today, in other words, to upset the course of events.

Once ministerial statements is over, they're over; we then proceed. Of course, unanimous consent can be sought from the House to upset the orders of the day, but, with respect, I submit the Speaker doesn't have that residual power. Notwithstanding your intent, you are beyond your jurisdiction in attempting to do what you're doing.

**The Speaker:** I thank the member. I do not believe I am beyond. I'm going to exercise the power and the minister is going to make the statement. Minister.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### WELFARE REFORM

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Speaker, I appreciate your time.

We recognize that sometimes the greatest barrier to employment is simply the lack of experience. That's why workfare placements remain a very important part of our welfare reform initiative. Our government believes that one of the real successes of our reform has been our placements, which have allowed people on welfare to acquire the new work skills, gain valuable job experience, get work references and find paid employment. Our government intends to see through on our commitment to

double the number of placements by the year 2002 so that more people will have the opportunity to benefit from this important part of our workfare program.

I'm pleased to report that the early indication is that we are well on our way to meeting that commitment and that our government will intensify its efforts to make certain that people who need a work placement to get job-ready will have one.

One of the reasons I'm confident we'll reach our target is that the Harris government is now leading by example. One of the biggest problems with workfare in the past was the lack of leadership from within the Ontario government. The latest numbers across the province government show that we are exceeding our own targets by more than 300 placements.

The next point in our five-point action plan, and another key Blueprint commitment, is caseworker training. Effective caseworkers are essential, I believe, to our welfare reform efforts, and I have seen this in every part of the province. It's caseworkers who are on the ground each and every day working with participants, helping them get the skills and the experience they need to break down the barriers to employment.

We know the job of a caseworker has changed a significant amount over the past six years. It used to be that much of what they did was about handing out cheques. Now they have the tools to give welfare recipients the hand up they need to move from welfare to work. The great news is that caseworkers are excited about their jobs again. I met a caseworker recently in Parry Sound who was positively bursting with excitement when she told me how good she felt helping someone she was working with get a job that actually paid more than she was making.

Any success the government has had in reforming the welfare system is due in large part to and dependent on the excellent job being done by Ontario Works caseworkers right across the province. Good teamwork is essential and nowhere is this more important, in my judgment, than in welfare reform. Welfare caseworkers have responded to the challenge of welfare reforms and have been instrumental in helping people move from welfare to work.

Building on their success, the government will launch an exciting new training initiative that will help equip caseworkers to help even more people realize the dignity that comes with a job and the pride that comes with independence. We'll provide an advance training program for caseworkers on the new focus of their profession, which is helping put people back to work.

The next point in our action plan is to provide \$10 million to help those individuals with multiple barriers to employment. As our caseload declines, there are some people on welfare who have increasingly complex barriers to employment. Our government believes that no one should be left behind. That's why we want to provide additional support to people who've been on welfare for more than two years or have one or more obstacles between them and a job.



We will be asking municipalities to submit proposals on how they can help these people, those who are most in need, get ready for work. Breaking down the barriers to employment for these individuals may be our government's biggest job, but it's a job that we're committed to tackling.

The final point in our action plan is mandatory drug treatment. Our government completed consultation with more than 600 individuals and groups and is moving forward with our Blueprint commitment to help those people move from drug dependency to self-sufficiency. The government wants to help people on welfare get ready to work. We want to break down the barriers to employment so that people can answer the call of a prospective employer. Whatever stands in their way, whether it's the lack of experience, whether it's poor reading skills or whether it's an addiction to alcohol or drugs, we think the government should help.

Senior ministry officials and I met with a good number of people regarding our mandatory drug treatment policy. We spoke with Keith Norton, the head of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. I spoke with Alan Borovoy, the director of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. I spoke with Sid Ryan, the Ontario president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. I spoke with welfare recipients who have been addicted to drugs, I spoke with addiction treatment providers and I spoke with caseworkers. We listened and we learned.

In truth, we met a lot of really passionate and dedicated individuals who are doing an excellent job each and every day to help people in this province beat addictions to alcohol and drugs. The input of these people really made us sit back and carefully consider our next steps. We know that addiction isn't easy to solve. Often there are complex social and health issues involved. Addiction impacts the whole family. Its destructive force isn't isolated on the user.

We also learned about the genuine fear a lot of alcoholics and drug addicts have of dealing with the underlying reality of their addiction and how it can become a coping mechanism for them.

These talks helped shape our policy. We heard that to focus only on illicit drugs would miss the point, as many people in fact are addicted to more than one substance. That's why we've chosen a comprehensive approach that will include alcohol and prescription drugs as part of the program. We heard that chemical tests demonstrate use, not abuse. That's why specialized staff in welfare offices will complete an initial screening and, if necessary, clients will be referred to more comprehensive assessment services. We heard that few go into addiction treatment voluntarily. That's why our program will be mandatory, and those who refuse treatment will cause themselves to be ineligible for welfare.

We heard treatment is a long-term process, that it often takes someone several attempts to quit. That's why the program will not tie welfare benefits to success. If someone makes an honest attempt to deal with their addictions and they fail, we'll stick with them and we'll try again.

We heard that we should use a phased-in approach to ensure we have the time to get it right. That's why we will start our mandatory drug treatment program in three to five municipalities early in the new year and we'll extend it across the province to all 47 municipalities over 47 months.

In shaping this policy, our government has listened to a lot of different people. We heard a lot of people talk about what they would like to see in our policy. We also heard people talk about what they didn't want to see in our policies. But at the end of the day, some individuals we'll respectfully disagree with.

One of the more compelling stories we heard was how people addicted to drugs or alcohol almost always need a push to finally go and get help. Sometimes that push comes from a spouse or other family member. Sometimes that push comes from employers. Sometimes that push comes from a friend. Unfortunately, that push has never come from the welfare system. We think that's wrong. We think it's time that the welfare system in Ontario is there to help people whose addiction to alcohol or drugs is a barrier to their getting a job.

Having completed extensive consultation and study, the government will introduce mandatory addiction treatment for welfare recipients. To turn our back on just one of these people, in my judgment, would be wrong. Our five-point action plan on welfare reform is a further attempt by our government to ensure that people on welfare are ready to work. We want to help caseworkers get the skills, we want to help welfare recipients remove the barriers and we want to help employers fill the positions so we can continue to make Ontario the very best place to live, work and raise a family for all of us.

1430

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** What an appalling ministerial statement. It's just unbelievable, really nothing more than another attack on the poorest citizens in our province who have been under attack by this government from the moment they came into power.

What is astonishing is that from the moment this minister went into a press conference in November and took a box filled with syringes and poured them on the table, he made it very clear what his intentions were: he was going to define poor people and people on social assistance as drug addicts. Clearly he's determined to go ahead.

Today he's added one other element to this that needs to be mentioned. He's talking about mandatory literacy tests. We know that people want as much help as they can get in terms of literacy. That service is being provided. But now they're saying they're going to kick people off welfare unless they agree to mandatory literacy tests and they pass or fail. That is just another cruel attack on poor people.

Let me get back to the mandatory drug testing, though, because the truth is that what the minister announced today, and I hope it was noticed by everyone, may actually be worse than what he was talking about back in

November. He's acknowledged that urine testing and chemical testing are actually pretty tricky stuff. So what they're going to do now is have screening tests that are essentially paper screening. What he seems to be setting up, and I look forward to talking about this some more, is an opportunity or a demand on his part for people to answer these questions—I've seen some of these screening tests—and if you don't answer the way you're supposed to, you're going to be told you're going into drug treatment whether you like it or not.

You know something? There's not one penny announced here for addiction treatment centres—nothing at all—and nothing at all in terms of literacy testing as well. There's nothing there at all. It's one of those vague opportunities they want to use to bash people.

He talks about a consultation paper or the consultations he did with 600 people. You say you've spoken to Keith Norton. I'll tell you, Minister, I'd like to know how recently you've spoken to Keith Norton. I spoke to him very recently and I certainly didn't get the impression you had given him an opportunity to respond to this. This is ultimately a way for you to try and get around the fact that this is a human rights violation. People with addiction and drug abuse and alcohol problems are people who have disabilities in very many cases. The fact is that you are trying to get around that by doing it in this fashion, and you know that. So I certainly would like to know that.

This consultation paper: you talked to Alan Borovoy. I'll tell you something, I think you should release that consultation paper to the House. I think we should have an opportunity to look at that consultation paper to see exactly what came out of that, because that is obviously something you don't want to release. Do you know something? We've spoken to a lot of people as well and they were very clear. You give a passing mention to the fact that not everybody agrees with you. The fact is that the vast majority don't agree with you and I think you know that. You're just so darned determined to go ahead with this, no matter what, and to try to paint the poor people of our province in such a fashion.

The truth is that you have an opportunity to help the poor people in our province, to help those who are living in poverty, and you've done nothing but attack them from the word go.

Let me make one quick reference as well to the hard-to-serve population. You've got dollars attached to that which you're going to give to municipalities. Ultimately those are just code words for a way to try and get those people off the system as well. It's another attack on the people who are more hard to serve, and it's absolutely upsetting to see it framed in that manner. "We're going to basically give the municipalities some money so they can do our job for us." There are already so many stories out there of municipalities being put into a terrible position in terms of the work they have to do to follow through on the minister's mandates.

A couple of weeks ago we asked this government and this minister and the Premier to look at doing a social

audit. You want to talk about your process, about your policies working. We think you should at least do—they even do it in the States, by the way. You like to follow the Americans. At least they make sure there's a legislated obligation that when you do major social reforms, there has to be an outcome evaluation done. We think that needs to happen as well.

We call on you to do a social audit, to be able to see whether or not your programs are working. If you're not afraid of the policies you've put forward, surely you will accept that there should be an evaluation of them. Are more children living in poverty? Is it more difficult for people on social assistance to survive? We know it is. We know that shelter costs are skyrocketing; we know that home heating oil is skyrocketing; we know that the price of gas for our car is skyrocketing. You make no mention of that at all. You continue to simply ignore that.

Your announcement today is offensive. You've added one more insult to the poor people in our province by making it clear that people have to take mandatory literacy tests or else they're going to get kicked off the system. It's another little wedge you're pushing in there.

I think, Minister, you know well that we want to see the consultation paper you've put out there. I think it's our right to have it. We think what you're doing is actually sneakier and more dangerous ultimately and is going to hurt more people. I sure want to know whether Keith Norton of the Human Rights Commission has had an opportunity to see this in advance, because I'd be very surprised if he can accept this. This is a violation of human rights and you should be ashamed of yourself.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** The most telling indicator that workfare was and continues to be a dismal failure was the action by this government to bribe municipalities, that they would get more money if they could exceed their workfare target. The sad reality is that this government has downloaded so many costs on to municipalities for so many services that some municipalities have actually had to do that.

We know that the majority of workfare clients are not in placements that will lead to full-time, permanent work. They are being registered in upgrading or they are being registered in resumé writing. They are not in positions that will lead to full-time employment to get them back into a productive place in the economy. If the government wanted to do something about upgrading and remedial work, it would fund adult education in the province of Ontario again.

The minister says that the Ontario government has exceeded its placement by 300 jobs. I ask the question, Minister, how many of those jobs were formally OPSEU-paid jobs, where people have been laid off and are now being replaced by Ontario Works clients? We had a call from someone in North Bay who said they had a new client come into their office yesterday who is taking a position. They were asked to welcome her as an OW client. She is replacing someone who was laid off from a position two years ago. That's what's happening. If that's what you're doing in the public service, imagine the



message you're sending to your friends in the private sector, which is, "Go ahead, lay off your workers. Use workfare. Get money from this government to put workfare clients in your place of work. After they finish your placement, fire them and let's start again." That's how we get rid of full-time, hard-working people so the government can hit its workfare targets.

We also know, with respect to the supports needed to make workfare work, that the child care component has been a dismal failure too. KPMG in 1998 told this government that there would have to be a massive increase in funding for regulated child care for workfare to work in this province. What did this government do? It has cut regulated child care funding by over 15%. This government was actually spending \$43 less per child in regulated care between 1995 and 1998.

We also know that municipalities that are oh so desperate to exceed their targets in order to get some more money to deal with their other downloaded costs are now bumping working families who are on subsidized waiting lists by workfare clients. They are doing that, bumping those hard-working families out who are on a waiting list for subsidized care, because the more people they can get into child care, the more they can bump up their numbers and hopefully the more money they can get. We heard an example of that when we were in Niagara of a working mom, Marney MacLean, who could not get a subsidized space, but if she was forced on to OW, would go to the top of the list in Niagara for a spot, and she was working.

With respect to the announcement re drug testing and mandatory assistance, I would like to know what Keith Norton had to say. I bet he told the minister this violates the Human Rights Code. I would like to know what Alan Borovoy told this ministry. I bet he told you, Minister, that this violates any number of civil liberties. I'd like to know what Sid Ryan said. I hope he told you that his workers are not going to impose testing on workfare recipients in their offices.

There is no evidence, absolutely none, that welfare recipients use drugs or alcohol to a greater extent than anyone in the general population—no evidence whatsoever. The testing we're going to need to have mandatory treatment will require, obviously, mandatory testing.

I ask these questions: who pays for it? Addictions research has already told this government that it will cost at least \$2,000 to do a real test to determine if someone is actually addicted. Who's going to pay for that? Who will do the testing? You're asking people who work for municipalities to pit themselves against their own clients, for goodness' sake, to think that they might be on drugs and then to go forward with the testing. Where are people going to get treatment? We know there are any number of programs across this province for drug and alcohol treatment that have huge waiting lists now. The government says nothing with respect to who's going to pay or where the treatment is going to be provided.

The most important question, though, is, why is the government doing this? The answer is that this is one more opportunity for this government to bash welfare

recipients, to attack the poorest Ontarians, to vilify the poor, because you're not talking about mandatory testing or treatment for anyone else who gets public money for their livelihood. You're not talking about testing MPPs or doctors or nurses or police officers or judges or OPSEU staff or anyone else. No, you're accusing only welfare recipients because it makes you folks oh so happy to bash the poor. It's a disgusting announcement; it's a disgusting action. Shame on all of you for supporting any of this.

1440

## ORAL QUESTIONS (continued)

### TUITION FEES

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):**

My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The Ontario Liberal Party is committed to accessibility to medical school for all students. Yesterday in question period, the Premier, and earlier the health minister, made a number of statements that were incorrect and need to be corrected. I'd like to set the record straight.

Ontario's medical school tuition is the highest in the country. Next year's tuition will reach \$15,000 a year in some schools. Other provinces still offer tuition under \$5,000. The \$22,000 that the health minister referred to earlier does not go to the students, it goes to the institutions. It does not go to offset their loans, it does not go toward their tuition.

We are losing our students to other jurisdictions. Last year, 41% of University of Toronto out-of-province applicants went elsewhere. Why wouldn't they, with tuition being one third of the cost? Unlike what the Premier was purporting yesterday, at the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario, 25% of the students will graduate with a debt of \$100,000 and more, not the \$28,000 that the Premier purported yesterday.

The facts are clear: medical tuition has doubled, and in some cases tripled, since deregulation. This government's policies ensure that only the wealthy will be able to become doctors. Minister, will you commit today to capping tuition for medical schools until you have put in place adequate funding mechanisms for all students?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** I thank my colleague for the question. I would like to start with the point of adequate assistance for the students. I believe we have done that. As a matter of fact, we have been advised that at the University of Western Ontario assistance is available for any student who goes for assistance in any course, but especially medicine. I will tell you now that one third of the tuition is set aside for medical students and other students. Each medical student has a consultant or counsellor who works with them, and they go and they apply. There are three

different funds: they have OSAP, they have the set-aside fund and they have a grant. They are taken care of.

Yes, it is a fact that students do graduate with different levels of debt. Year by year, we forgive the amount of money over \$7,000 that students in fact—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** The Premier also said yesterday, in his own special way, that if there is any student who is not accessing medical school because of financial difficulties, to call his office. He made a similar promise last year to families who couldn't buy Christmas presents for their children. When the families called, he referred them to local charities. Is that what your generous Premier is going to do if medical students do take him up on his offer and call—maybe refer them to the nearest food bank? Do you support your Premier and his empty and vacant promises?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** As I have already stated, if a medical student is having difficulty, they have been assigned counsellors at the medical schools in the universities to assist them. I will say that the disappointment of this debate is implying that students who are qualified to go to medical school and who in fact get into medical school have to have money. That is not the case. In fact, at the University of Western Ontario, the one I know best, the provost actually stated in a survey they did that this is not the case, that the amount of money parents have has nothing to do with young people who want to go to medical school.

My message today to young people who want to go to medical school is, get good marks, pass the tests and you will be accepted, and this government will help anyone who needs assistance.

#### LABOUR AGENCY REFORM

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** My question is for the Minister of Labour. In February, your ministry released a white paper entitled Looking Forward: A New Tribunal for Ontario's Workplaces. This document put forward some proposals that would address concerns that have been raised for some time about the various agencies that deal with workplace issues.

I understand that you have been very busy over the past two months consulting with stakeholders involved with the agencies affected by this proposal. Would you please take a moment to tell this House about some of the input you have received during these consultations.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I appreciate the question from the member and hope to have many more, actually. Thank you very much.

I personally have attended seven round table discussions outside Toronto on this particular issue—Thunder Bay, Windsor, Ottawa; 20 consultation sessions in Toronto. We've met with over 250 representatives from both sides of the bar, people who use the various agencies on a very regular basis, and the ministry has been meeting on

a regular basis with the other five ministries that have been affected.

The key features to this particular approach to agency reform are to return to the initial mandate of the tribunals, which is expertise, quick decisions, at a reasonable cost. The obvious next matter is to provide single-window access for appeals; to improve regional delivery; and to reduce the multiple-forms appeals.

We hope to have this legislation ready for this session to introduce in this House and begin second reading. I'd be very interested to hear the concerns and issues brought forward by the members of my caucus.

**Mr Miller:** Thank you. Can you expand on the time frame for the proposed legislation, please?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** We'll continue with discussions with the stakeholders. I'm very proud of the fact that we met with a number of stakeholders before this legislation would come forward.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** It's important to deal with the issues.

The member opposite said we met with friends of the government. He's right. We've met with CUPE representatives; we've met with OPSEU representatives; we met with the CAW; we went to Windsor to meet with a series of union executive leaders; we invited Wayne Samuelson to meet with us. When we have these kinds of discussions we invite all our friends, and they're our friends because they want to see a strong Ontario too. A strong Ontario means jobs and reasonable access to tribunals.

The member from Hamilton shouts out once again, "Only the friends get access to this government." He's right. All Ontarians are our friends because a good Ontario is good for them and good for us.

#### MANDATORY DRUG TESTING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, from the moment that you took that box of syringes and turned them upside down for full display on the table, you were determined to go ahead with mandatory drug testing, despite the fact that all those who work in the field told you it was a bad idea, including, may I say, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, a government-funded agency who spoke up. And may I say also Keith Norton, the head of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Can you tell us today, Minister, what position the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health is taking on your announcement today, and for that matter, can you also tell us whether you have spoken to Keith Norton and got his position on this as early as today as well?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** The first one, I suspect, is against; the second, I suspect, doesn't give rulings in advance of seeing the policy's



implementation. I think the human rights commissioner is not going to take a government press release or a government policy position paper and make a ruling on the scene. It would be inappropriate for him to do so.

I can tell the member opposite that we engaged in extensive consultations. The ministry met with more than 600 individuals, with groups. We met with a wide range of opinion on the issue. We did meet with Mr Norton. He raised a good number of concerns.

I think the policy position that we've tabled today, the position that we'll move forward to implement, is a better policy as a result of those decisions. Particularly the biggest part of the policy, which is tying someone's ability to participate in Ontario Works to their participation requirements will be a good policy. Our motivation is to try to help people move from welfare to work. It can be tough to get a job if you're facing a drug addiction. We want to help people combat that and defeat it.

**Mr Gravelle:** It may be a better policy from their perspective, Mr Speaker, in terms of kicking people off welfare, simply because of the fact that they've changed the policy and have now done it through a screening process that will actually make it easier for them to eliminate people from the system.

In other words, you did not decide or choose to contact the human rights commissioner and say, "Mr Norton, this is the position we're going to be taking. What are your thoughts on it?" Surely, that would have made some sense. You obviously are not clear on what the position is for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

1450

You have spoken about your consultation. You've spoken about the 600 people. You've even mentioned some names. Don't you think the least you can do is allow us to see this consultation paper, to let us see what people have said about this? Rather, you just take this and make your decision based on this, as you are determined to do. Will you release that consultation to the members of the Legislature today so we can actually see what positions were taken outside your thinking?

**Hon Mr Baird:** There was no production of a global report pertaining to this policy. What we did was go out and speak to a whole lot of folks, people who provide treatment right across the province. We talked to caseworkers. I talked to one caseworker in a part of the province who said that someone, an Ontario Works recipient, had been coming into her office for a good number of years, obviously combating a drug addiction, and she was absolutely powerless to do anything about it.

My mandate as Minister of Community and Social Services is to provide the supports to people to help them get a job. It can be difficult to get a job if you're facing a drug addiction. I appreciate that the member opposite disagrees with the policy. That disagreement and that objection were not very loud during the election in 1999. We consulted broadly with the people across Ontario back in 1999, and I know this was a big issue in the provincial election campaign. This is a government that keeps its election commitments.

## PHARMACARE

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The minister is well aware that before the 1997 federal election, the Liberal Party of Canada printed a red book that contained a commitment to a national pharmacare program that would ensure that "all Canadians have access to medically necessary drugs within the public health care system." They continued by saying—again this is a direct quotation from the federal Liberal red book—"We will develop with these groups the timetable and fiscal framework for the implementation of universal public coverage for medically necessary drugs."

It's been almost four years and two federal elections later and we have yet to hear any concrete details about the pharmacare program from the federal government. Will the minister provide this House with an update on the status of the government of Canada's promise to provide a pharmacare program in relation to what Ontario's patients need?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the member for Waterloo-Wellington for the question, and indeed I have heard nothing in my deliberations with the government of Canada to indicate that this has been discussed or that they wish to discuss it with us. We've signalled our intention to fully engage in the national dialogue on health care reform that is being headed up by Roy Romanow. We want to work with Mr Romanow. We want to ensure that publicly funded, universally accessible health care remains viable and sustainable, not only in the short run but in the long run. We believe that pharmacare, a national program, should be discussed because we've maintained that everything should be on the table for discussion. As long as Mr Romanow sticks to his plan to keep an open mind, which I think he will, we look forward to contributing to that national debate.

**Mr Arnott:** I want to thank the minister for his answer and indicate—I can report from my own experience—that the government of Canada will not even acknowledge what seemed like a grand design for a pharmacare program, and now it seems like just another broken Grit promise. I wrote to Prime Minister Chrétien on February 23 of this year, about two months ago, asking if it was his government's intention to move forward with pharmacare. More than two months have passed and I have yet to receive a comprehensive reply, except for a note from one of his staffers indicating they had received my letter.

Just over a year ago, all parties of this House provided support for my private member's resolution calling for the restoration of the federal health care funds that the federal government had cut, and for the establishment of an escalator clause to ensure the increased funding kept pace with the rising costs of operating our health system. Published accounts say that the Premier of Ontario has now written to Roy Romanow requesting that the royal commission on health care make an interim recom-

mendation for an immediate escalator to the Canada health and social transfer, the federal program that supports health care in Ontario.

Could the minister update the House on Ontario's health care priorities and our expectations with regard to those areas where the government of Canada persists in underfunding our province's health care system?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I think we should acknowledge in this House the work of the member from Waterloo-Wellington.

*Applause.*

**Hon Mr Clement:** He has done a commendable job of reminding the federal government of a very important Liberal campaign promise, and he deserves every amount of that applause.

I want you to know that Premier Harris has been the strongest advocate of all of the Premiers for equitable health care funding for the health care system delivered by the provinces. We believe that the federal government could do more and should do more for fairer funding of our health care system. We have called for at least \$1.2 billion in additional funding from the federal government, and that simply brings their contributions up to the 1994 levels, a far cry from the 50-50 funding formula promise that is so remarked upon with an amount of pride. The Canada Health Act is a matter of pride by the federal government, but they're not living up to their funding commitments. We have called for an immediate cost escalator, with the federal government paying for 50% of any annual increases in health care costs. Perhaps the brave actions of the member from Waterloo-Wellington could be repeated on the other side of this Legislature.

### MINIMUM WAGE

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, as you prepare your budget, I ask you to stand up for minimum wage earners. Today, the Centre for Social Justice released a damning report. It shows that visible minority workers are four times more likely to have a university degree than the rest of us, yet they get paid 30% less.

You can do something about that, Deputy Premier. Will you raise the minimum wage to \$7.50 an hour to help address this problem?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I refer this to the Minister of Labour.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I understand the member opposite introduced a bill again today with respect to the minimum wage. We must examine the minimum wage in the context of the decade of, say, the 1990s, rather than individually in selective years that he simply chooses to quote from.

During the 1990s, the minimum wage was raised by 37%. There was a fairly substantial increase to the minimum wage at that time. We understood that fact. When we came into government, there was a 37% increase. We are very competitive with neighbouring jurisdictions. We

rank third in Canada, and we're very competitive with our neighbours to the south.

The arguments that you continue to put forward are premised on I'm not sure exactly what. From our comparative notes and studies that we've done, we are not at the top, agreed, but we aren't anywhere near the bottom of the minimum wage in this country. We are at the top third of provinces in this country. So as far as I'm concerned, the minimum wage needs to be at a competitive rate. The competitive rate that we have pegged it at, at this point in time, we think is competitive and, by jurisdiction, a fair remuneration.

**Mr Hampton:** The Minister of Labour knows full well that our major economic trading partner is the United States. The minimum wage in the United States, expressed in Canadian dollars, is now a little bit in excess of \$7.50.

But he should look at this report, because what it shows is that the worst situation is in our cities, where visible minorities now make up to 75% of the population. Too often, they're segregated into low-wage jobs, underemployed and undervalued.

Your government says that it cares about jobs and about prosperity. You and the Deputy Premier can do something about this in the budget next week. You can raise the minimum wage so that it is equivalent to the minimum wage of our major trading partner, the United States: \$7.50 an hour. What do you say, Minister of Labour? What do you say about having a similar minimum wage to what they have now with our major trading partner, the United States?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** There are variable rates in the United States with respect to the minimum wage. In some jurisdictions they are marginally higher than us; certainly they are. In other jurisdictions they have less than us. In Ohio, at certain levels they equate to less of a minimum wage than we offer in this province.

The difficulties with your misguided policies when you were in office were that you just simply ignored the prevailing issues and concerns out there when it came to competitiveness and job creation. You created a huge deficit, you priced us out of the marketplace in certain sectors, so therefore we lost jobs, we lost tax dollars, we lost the opportunity to fund health care, we lost the opportunity to fund education.

If you're asking me to adopt your misguided financial approach to government, I won't do it. More importantly, not only will I not do it, I will stand up and proudly proclaim that I will not adopt Bob Rae's misguided financial approach to administrative government. I'm not going to apologize for that. In fact, I will celebrate it.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** You're a sick man.

1500

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.



**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask the member for—I'm not certain of her riding, Riverdale—

**Interjection:** Toronto-Danforth.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** —Toronto-Danforth to withdraw that comment. I found it inappropriate and offensive.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I didn't hear it. I was listening to the question. I understand she did say something and it's—

**Interjections.**

**The Speaker:** Order. The table did hear it. I will ask you to withdraw it.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** The member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington may continue.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. In February 2000, your task force on intensive farming asked Ontarians for input on intensive farming. I made a submission to this task force on behalf of my constituents and indicated that your government must enact provincial standards, and that the cost of implementation, monitoring and enforcing these standards should not be downloaded to farmers or municipalities.

Today in my riding, almost a year and a half later, farmers are waiting, residents are waiting and at least two municipalities—Stone Mills and Loyalist township—are still waiting for you to do what you promised. They are waiting for you to introduce an agricultural operations act.

The Walkerton tragedy has alarmed and alerted the entire province about the need for provincial standards, regulations and enforcement to protect our groundwater and ensure that Ontario families are safe. When will you introduce what you have promised: an agricultural operations act?

**Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I thank the member opposite for the question. I want to assure all members of the House that we are committed to ensuring that there is safe, clean drinking water throughout Ontario for everyone. As part of this commitment we have been working, and working diligently, with our stakeholders to develop the best possible approach to address the agricultural operations and the rural environment.

This is a complex issue that affects many people and businesses, and that's why we're working very closely with our stakeholders, with the Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, farmers, the stakeholders in agribusiness, municipal stakeholders and environmental stakeholders. It's important that we get this legislation right, that consultation is extensive and that it continue so that we get the appropriate legislation to deal with it.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** It's very interesting. I knew the exact words you were going to use today because "taking the time to get it right" was

a valid comment one year ago. You consulted with farmers, organizations and municipalities. But on July 7, 2000, Minister Hardeman made the commitment to legislation with regulations. I urged you, though, yesterday, to change those key words from "strategy" to "guidelines." A guideline is very different from a regulation and a strategy is a far cry from legislation.

Welcome to the world of Mike Harris, where a minister who was going to do the right job gets shuffled out for doing the right thing. I know very well that the message you delivered yesterday, the statement that was delivered yesterday, Minister, came from the centre. We know who's pulling the strings in this province, and that's the centre.

But I think it's of extreme importance that you clarify to Ontario's agricultural community today why you have retracted, why you've backtracked on that original commitment the previous Minister of Agriculture made. Why are you going backwards? Why strategy? Why guidelines? Why not legislation? Why not regulations?

**Hon Mr Coburn:** As I indicated in my previous answer, we are consulting extensively with the stakeholders, who have a lot vested in this, whether you're an environmentalist or you're a farmer, on how you protect the land and how you protect their water and how we enhance that—consultation on a complex issue. We've had a variety of suggestions from those stakeholders. We are continuing to work with them to find the best possible solution so that we can enhance the water quality and protect and provide broad sustainability of agriculture and our environment.

## WELFARE REFORM

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** I have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Over the last four months during the inter-session—the Liberals seem to think we don't do anything during those inter-session periods—I spent that time meeting with hundreds of my constituents.

Many of those constituents complimented our government, under the leadership of Premier Mike Harris, for the hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who have been able to leave the bondage of welfare and obtain the dignity and independence of a job, and they've complimented us for the 800,000-plus net new jobs we've created.

While these Ontarians who were on welfare are now earning money and enjoying the responsibilities and rewards, including the interpersonal relationships that go along with employment, many constituents wonder whether Kitchener has benefited.

Minister, could you tell my constituents in Kitchener how successful Ontario Works has been in our community?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** When we took office in 1995, the welfare system in this

province was a mess. It was a disgrace, and the people of Ontario asked for a government to take action and clean up a system that wasn't working for people any more.

In the last year, over 50,000 people have participated in community placements, and that's doing a tremendous amount to help people get the skills and experience they need to move from welfare to work. It can be as simple as getting a job reference. It can be as simple as improving your self-esteem. It can be as simple as having something to put down on the "recent job experience" part of a job application.

I am pleased to say that more than 1,100 people took advantage of that opportunity in Kitchener-Waterloo, and that's a tremendously important accomplishment. More than 807,000 net new jobs have been created, and more than 578,000 people have left the welfare system since 1995. That's a record that the people of Ontario are very proud of.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** That's fine, Minister, but you still didn't tell me what it meant in Kitchener in terms of the number of people who have left welfare. I have talked to a number of constituents who need more supports to help them get back into the workforce, and I'm concerned that they may not benefit from Ontario's economic strength.

This government needs to do more to help these people get back into the workforce. What will you do to address the situation in Kitchener, as well as across the province?

**Hon Mr Baird:** Over the last fiscal year we saw for the first time in many years the number of people on welfare in Kitchener-Waterloo fall below the 50% mark. More than 50% of the caseload has been able to leave the welfare system, and that's good news.

I'll tell you what we can do to help provide more support for people on social assistance in Kitchener. We'll provide mandatory literacy training to help people beat what can be one of the biggest barriers to their getting a job: the ability to function and use basic math skills. We'll help expand work for welfare, to provide more placements to more people so that they can realize the dignity that comes with a job and the pride that comes with independence.

We'll provide more caseworker training to equip caseworkers, the real heroes in our welfare system, with more skills to be able to provide even more support. We'll provide \$10 million to provide special support to people who have been on welfare for more than two years. Finally, we'll provide help to people who need the services to defeat and to beat drug addiction.

### ECONOMIC POLICY

**Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Finance. The May 7, 2001, issue of *BusinessWeek* carries an article entitled, "The US Spreads the Pain." The article points out that US imports tumbled by 4.4% in February. Significantly, the import drop was broad-based, encompassing both consumer and capital goods, especially in the automotive sector.

The impact of slower US import demands puts us at risk. You know, Minister, or you ought to know, that we depend on US imports for our economic well-being. With the US teetering on the edge of recession, Japan still mired in weakness, and growth in Europe slowing, that impact could be considerable.

Your government has consistently mistakenly stated that the recent prolonged economic growth in Ontario has been as a result of your tax cuts. The evidence clearly shows that the buoyancy of the US market and our ability to access that market has been the greatest single factor in our economic growth.

1510

Could you tell us what your plans are to counter the impact of the US contraction of imports that will undoubtedly have an impact on Ontario's economy?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I thank the member opposite for the question. There's no question that there has been some slowing in the manufacturing sector in Ontario. There's also no question that there's been some slowing in the IT sector. Fortunately, since 1995 we have been growing, through useful government policies, a diversified economy in Ontario, so that we have not only a diversified economy but an economy that is resilient. We have substantial secondary and services sectors—our wholesale and retail trade sector at 13%, our finance sector at 17%, and our construction sector, which continues to boom, at 4.5% of our GDP. Our GDP has grown over that period of time in excess of 20%, as the honourable member opposite knows.

We have growth in Ontario; we have significant growth in Ontario. We do not have the high rate of unsustainable growth that we had in recent years.

**Mr Kwinter:** We've got to talk about competitiveness, and competitiveness is more than tax cuts and the low Canadian dollar. Of your 166 vaunted tax cuts, 132 went to corporations, yet recent studies have shown that we are slipping in global competitiveness and that most Ontario companies have not become global competitors, industry leaders or even especially innovative. The manufacturing sector is under severe pressure and it's evidenced by the loss of 46,000 manufacturing jobs in Ontario since January. There are also record levels of inventories. Minister, when are you going to stop putting politics ahead of economics, endangering the economic prosperity of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** I take it from the comments of the member opposite that he is opposed to tax cuts stimulating the economy in Ontario. I know his leader, Dalton McGuinty, is opposed to tax cuts because he has said so. But it does depend on which Liberal you talk to.

If you speak to the Liberal who actually has fiscal responsibility in this country, the federal Minister of Finance, Paul Martin, he says, "Grassroots Liberals from coast to coast support the necessity of bringing down tax cuts." He says, "Tax reduction is essential to secure strong and sustained economic growth." He says, "Obviously we are concerned by the implications of the



slowdown in the United States. The fact is that the very large fiscal stimulus of tax cuts and spending on things like health care is exactly the tonic required."

It depends which Liberal you speak to.

### RURAL JOBS STRATEGY

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** While I have the floor, there are a couple of things that would lead up to my question. The first one is the heat in here. I don't like to be complaining to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, but most of the farmers in my riding take better care of the temperature for their livestock than we do in this chamber.

The other thing, while I'm addressing my question to the Minister of Agriculture, is the disease that has caused the recent cancellation of the Ontario Pork Congress in Stratford, which is hoof and mouth disease. Nearly everywhere I see it referred to as foot and mouth disease. As the member for St Catharines will certainly know, sheep, goats and cattle don't have feet, they have hooves. So the disease is hoof and mouth disease.

What I'm really concerned about right now is the young people in my riding who need jobs. Particularly in the riding of Perth-Middlesex, but also across Ontario, they're looking for jobs. I want to know what kinds of things our ministry is doing to help rural youth find jobs.

**Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I thank the honourable member for Perth-Middlesex for the question. I'm pleased to let members of the Legislature know that this year's rural summer jobs program is up and running. The program provides a great opportunity for rural youth right across Ontario. My ministry works in partnership with the summer jobs service program and in partnership with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. This program provides rural youth with an opportunity to find summer employment in rural communities across the province.

Historically, it has certainly been a hit with employers. Last year, approximately 500 farm food processing and rural employers participated in this particular program, which created over 4,300 student placements across rural Ontario.

**Mr Johnson:** Minister, from my understanding this program last year was well received by all parties involved. However, I've had constituents in my riding tell me that they were not able to enrol in this program because it was so popular. Can you please tell me if we've taken any steps to rectify this problem?

**Hon Mr Coburn:** In the past, we couldn't accommodate all of the employers who wanted to participate in the program. So I'm happy to report that this year we are introducing changes that will maximize the number of employers. As a result, a variety of employment opportunities in farming, food processing and in the rural and agricultural businesses are available to youth.

The 2001 rural summer jobs service will accept applications over a three-week period. Our goal is to provide all eligible employers with wage subsidies for at least one student position. This provides more opportunities for students, opportunities for a variety of experiences in the agricultural business.

### MANDATORY DRUG TESTING

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, what exactly did Alan Borovoy and Sid Ryan tell you about your mandatory drug testing and drug treatment plan?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I'm very happy to share what Sid Ryan said the day I met him. He said, "It is a positive sign that we are meeting. He's thoroughly accessible as the minister, I will say that about him. He has been accessible in terms of when we need to meet with him on issues. I think in some ways he does understand a little bit about the social services sector, but on this particular issue he's completely off the mark."

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Supplementary?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** The minister may be disinclined to tell you what he was told by this gentleman. I just got off the phone with Alan Borovoy, Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and Sid Ryan, CUPE. Alan Borovoy told you that that Canadian Civil Liberties Association was opposed to your mandatory drug testing, drug treatment. Sid Ryan told you that CUPE members would not participate in mandatory drug testing.

Minister, you were tested today. You didn't come out clean. Why won't you acknowledge that you don't have support from these sectors for your negative, incredibly cynical, sick program?

**Hon Mr Baird:** I didn't for one moment suggest that Alan Borovoy supported this policy. I didn't for one moment suggest that Sid Ryan supported this policy. But what I did say is that we met with more than 600 individuals and groups to get their input. We listened and we learned. I think we did, as the policy that we announced today reflects, learn a terrific amount.

The one benefit that Sid Ryan has: at least he can come in and meet with me.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a question for the Minister of the Environment, particularly in view of the alarming reports that came out yesterday about air quality in this province.

The minister will recall that during the by-election campaign, I asked that her ministry release a report that was being kept secret by her ministry on air quality in the Parry Sound-Muskoka area. We know that the air quality

index was 61, which is remarkably above what it should be, on Tuesday of this week. In other places, such as Algonquin Park, it was 62. So it shows that in cottage country, where people often go for recreational purposes, the air quality is bad.

Can the minister tell us why it is that her ministry has withheld that report? I know that a person in her ministry, her spokesperson, Barry Wilson, when asked, said, "Absolutely not. Jim Bradley can walk around and communicate his conspiracy theories, but the bottom line is the report is not complete, it is not done yet. It's being finalized, and when it's complete, it will be released."

Now, that was supposed to be at least by March 31, after the by-election. Can the minister tell us why it was that this report was withheld during the by-election campaign?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** I will certainly take that question under advisement and I will follow through and provide the members opposite with the appropriate response.

1520

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I want to outline the business of the House for next week.

On Monday afternoon, we will continue the debate on Bill 19, the Ontario Student Loan Harmonization Act.

On Tuesday afternoon, we will continue debate on Bill 19, the Ontario Student Loan Harmonization Act.

On Wednesday afternoon, obviously the Minister of Finance will deliver the budget.

On Thursday morning during private members' business, we will discuss ballot items 5 and 6.

On Thursday afternoon, we will continue debate on the budget.

Other business of the House may be discussed in regular evening sittings next week, and we've filed the appropriate motions to that effect.

## PETITIONS

### EDUCATION LEGISLATION

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Bill 74, the Education Accountability Act, 2000, was passed by the Legislature of Ontario, and

"Whereas this bill is having a destabilizing effect on schools in Ontario,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the bill as follows:

"(1) Make co-instructional activities voluntary.

"(2) Reduce instructional time for secondary school teachers to six periods per day to allow for increased student/teacher interaction outside of the classroom....

"(3) Allow trustees to exercise their democratic right to find local solutions for local issues."

These petitions are signed by many dozens of parents from St Martin school in my riding. In full agreement with their concerns, I affix my own signature.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bill 96, the Safe Drinking Water Act, recognized the entitlement of all Ontarians to safe drinking water and provides mechanisms to help Ontarians monitor and protect that right;

"Whereas Bill 71, the Oak Ridges Moraine Green Planning Act, would have protected a vital Ontario environmental and ecological feature as well as habitats of threatened and endangered species from destruction through unchecked development;

"Whereas both bills responded to important problems affecting our environment and public health and safety;

"Whereas the government's decision to prorogue the Ontario Legislature has killed both of these bills before they could be passed into law;

"Whereas both Bill 96 and Bill 71 had received support from all three parties through first and second readings and could have been quickly passed into law if the Legislature had not been prorogued;

"Whereas the government will use the start of the new session to deliver a throne speech outlining their vision and priorities for Ontario;

"Whereas events like the drinking water disaster in Walkerton and the ongoing battle to safeguard the Oak Ridges moraine graphically illustrate the urgency for the government to address environmental issues;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature to call on the government to reintroduce the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Oak Ridges Moraine Green Planning Act and to ensure their speedy passage into law."

As you know, Mr Speaker, I have reintroduced both these bills. So I will gladly affix my signature to this petition.

### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death in North America; and

"Whereas studies conducted by the city of Toronto, the United States and Great Britain have all reported that drivers using cellular phones while operating a vehicle significantly increase the risk of collision; and

"Whereas people talking on cellular phones while driving may cause a 34% higher risk of having an accident;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban the use of hand-held cellular phones, portable computers," faxes and other electronic equipment "while operating a motor vehicle. We further respectfully request that" you support Bill 102, by Mr



O'Toole, "An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit the use of phones and other equipment while driving on a highway" and we encourage you to pass this "unanimously by all members of the Parliament of Ontario."

I am pleased to sign and support this, as I wrote it.

### ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** A petition to the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas Mike Harris promised an Ontarians with Disabilities Act during the 1995 election and renewed that commitment in 1997 but has yet to make good on that promise; and

"Whereas the Harris government has not committed to holding open consultations with the various stakeholders and individuals on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act; and

"Whereas the minister responsible for persons with disabilities will not commit to the 11 principles outlined by the Ontarians with Disabilities Act committee; and

"Whereas the vast majority of Ontario citizens believe there should be an Ontarians with Disabilities Act to remove the barriers facing the 1.5 million persons with disabilities;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"To pass a strong and effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act that would remove the barriers facing the 1.5 million persons with disabilities in this province of Ontario."

I wholeheartedly endorse this and will affix my signature hereto.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** This petition is from citizens wanting a rent freeze.

"Whereas the annual rent increase guideline for multi-unit residential dwellings in Ontario increases every year more than the rate of inflation and more than the cost-of-living increase for most tenants;

"Whereas no new affordable rental housing is being built by the private sector, despite the promise that the implementation of vacancy decontrol in June of 1998 would encourage new construction;

"Whereas over 100,000 people are on the waiting list for social housing, homelessness has increased as a result of unaffordable rents, and high rents are a direct cause of the national housing crisis;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement an immediate province-wide freeze on rents which will stop all guideline increases, above-guideline increases and increases to maximum rent for all sitting tenants in Ontario for a period of at least two years."

I support this petition.

### KARLA HOMOLKA

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads:

"Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka, resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

"Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to pass to leave prison with an escort; and"

Whereas Karla Homolka enjoys an air-conditioned cell—unlike the political animals in this place;

"Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that truly reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario will:

"Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

"Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

"Fight Ottawa's plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

"Ensure that the Ontario government's sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible."

I'm more than happy to affix my signature to this petition.

### SALE OF SCHOOLS

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Hughes Public School at 17 Innes Ave in the city of Toronto closed down and its premises have been declared surplus by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB);

"Whereas the city of Toronto has issued a building permit to the TDSB permitting the reconstruction of Hughes Public School for an entity called Beatrice House, for the purpose of a private academic school;

"Whereas the Beatrice House is not a private school registered with the Ministry of Education, nor a mident has been issued to that organization;

"Whereas within the context of the zoning bylaw (438-86), the subject lands have been designated as R2 Z0.6 and permits a 'private academic, philanthropic or religious school';

"Whereas the TDSB has chosen not to lease the subject premises to a computer training company for \$1.25 million annually. Instead, the board has chosen to

lease it to the Beatrice House for a fraction of the current market value;

"Whereas a lease has not been signed between the TDSB and Beatrice House while renovations to the building are underway;

"Whereas local taxpayers' concerns have been ignored by the TDSB;

"Whereas other locations, such as the Brother Edmund Rice School at 55 Pelham Park or the Earls court Public School at 29 Ascot, which are being closed down, have been offered to Beatrice House to no avail;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Honourable Minister of Education investigate the leasing arrangement between the Toronto District School Board and Beatrice House inasmuch as:

"(1) Boards are to seek fair market value when selling, leasing or otherwise disposing of schools, except that the price for the property not to exceed the value of the ministry's grant for the new pupil places when the purchaser is a coterminous board, a provincial school or a publicly funded care and treatment facility offering programs leading to a diploma;

"(2) Boards are to offer the property to coterminous boards and other public agencies operating in the area in accordance with the priority order currently specified in regulation 444/98;

"(3) Toronto District School Board has not dealt in good faith with our neighbourhood residents;

"Therefore, we respectfully ask you to consider our plea for justice. The Toronto District School Board has ignored our concerns and due diligence. We as a community tried everything within our power to fight the glaring and obvious wrong done to us, to no avail."

I affix my signature to this petition.

1530

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** This petition is signed by 309 people.

"Whereas children are exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this government has reduced funding for Ontario's special education programs without regard to the impact these changes are having on some of the province's most vulnerable children; and

"Whereas these special needs" children "are now struggling with reductions in the amount of support they require with special education teachers, education assistants and classroom resources; and

"Whereas these high-need children thrive on consistency and routine and these disruptions in their educational support are negatively affecting their progress and self-esteem;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to restore fair and equitable funding to special education so that parents and teachers can provide the best future for our children."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas over 500,000 people in Ontario have diabetes; and

"Whereas to the expense of treating diabetes, many people cannot afford the ongoing expense of treating diabetes and if left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can lead to blindness, vascular disease, kidney disease, neuropathy and other problems; and

"Whereas today, more than ever before, people with diabetes can expect to live active, independent and vital lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful management of this disease; and

"Whereas by providing the resources to successfully manage this disease, the government can ensure more efficient health care for people with diabetes at a reduced cost to the health care system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

#### AIR QUALITY

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government's wholly owned Nanticoke generating station is North America's largest dirty coal-fired electricity producing plant and Ontario's largest producer of the chemicals and acid gases which contribute to deadly smog and acid rain; and



"Whereas the Nanticoke plant, which has more than doubled its dangerous emissions under the Harris government, is now the worst air polluter in all of Canada, spewing out over five million kilograms of toxic chemicals each year, including many cancer-causing chemicals and mercury, a potent, dangerous neurotoxin; and

"Whereas at least 13 Ontario municipalities and seven northeastern US states have expressed concerns that Ontario Power Generation's proposed cleanup plan for Nanticoke is inadequate in protecting the air quality and health and safety of the residents; and

"Whereas the Ontario Medical Association has stated that 1,900 Ontarians die prematurely each year and we pay \$1 billion annually in health-related costs as a result of air pollution; and

"Whereas because the Harris government has now lifted the moratorium on the sale of coal-fired power plants and has set a date for deregulation of electricity, the operator of the Nanticoke plant will likely stoke up production to maximize profits which will only worsen the air quality in cities like Kitchener, Windsor, London, Niagara Falls and St Catharines;

"Be it resolved that the Mike Harris government immediately order that the Nanticoke generating station be converted from dirty coal to cleaner-burning natural gas."

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

In agreement, I would be happy to sign my name.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### ONTARIO STUDENT LOAN HARMONIZATION ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'HARMONISATION DES PRÊTS D'ÉTUDES DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Gill, on behalf of Mrs Cunningham, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I'll be sharing my time with the member from Durham and the member from Simcoe North. I'm sure it's such a good bill that many other members will be happy to take part in this debate this afternoon.

I'm very pleased to speak today to the second reading of this bill, which will allow the Ontario government to ensure that willing and qualified students can continue to get a post-secondary education.

As the members may recall, the Ontario government signed an agreement in May 1999 with the federal government to move forward with the harmonization of our respective student loan programs. We entered into this agreement in order to improve services for borrowers, reduce student loan defaults and increase accountability in the administration of student loans.

Since that time, however, the national banks have announced that they are withdrawing from the delivery of student loans. As a result of that action, jurisdictions across Canada are putting in place alternative processes to ensure students continue to receive the assistance they need to pursue their post-secondary educational goals. Clearly Ontario must do the same if we want to ensure that students have access to funding for their portion of the cost of a post-secondary education.

Last year, more than 170,000 Ontario students received loans from the Ontario Student Assistance Program, which is also known as OSAP. We must ensure this assistance is also available to future generations.

The federal government has passed legislation that gives it the authority to introduce a direct loan program for the Canada student loan portion of student assistance. That program will be administered by independent service providers under contract to the federal government. There are provisions in the contract for the provinces to use the same service providers if they so choose. The legislation we are discussing today would, if passed by this Legislature, provide the Ontario government with the authority it needs to implement its agreement with the federal government for joint administration of the Canada and Ontario student loan programs.

We anticipate that this would result in better service for students. For example, student loan certificates will be provided through financial aid offices, as is the case right now with Canada student loans. Students would then be able to take the loan certificates to a student loan kiosk on campus or to Canada Post outlets. Funds would then be deposited directly to the student's bank account.

1540

Another example of enhanced service is that the borrowers will be contacted by the service providers at least twice a year to give them information about repayment or changes to the plan and to allow borrowers to update their information, such as addresses and phone numbers.

We are confident that this repayment system will be more efficient for students and will allow us to lower our loan default rate even more. As you may be aware, this year's default rate is 15.7%, which is down from 18.2% in 1999. This is the third consecutive annual drop in loan default rates for the province since 1997, when the overall rate was 23.5%. We have made significant gains. This puts us well ahead on our way to meeting our goal, set in 1998, of reducing overall OSAP default rates to less than 10% by 2003. We need to ensure fairness in the system, both for the taxpayers who fund the student loan program and for the hard-working students who pay back their loans.

I am pleased to note that the default rate has declined across the system. The rate for university students is 7.1%, down from 8.4% and already below the 10% goal that we had set out to be met in 2003. The rate for college students is 17.2%, and that is down from 20.1%. The rate for students at private vocational schools is 28.9%, still quite high, but the trend is downwards. It is down from 31%.

I want to digress for a moment to emphasize that the default rates have maintained a steady decline since our government started reporting publicly on the default rates. This clearly demonstrates that our commitment to accountability, to measuring and reporting on how taxpayer dollars are spent, does improve efficiency and effectiveness. Information on default rates is now available to the public, just as we now require colleges and universities to make available to the public information on their performance in key areas such as student and employer satisfaction and the employment rates of graduates. We are now allocating a portion of the institutions' operating grants on their performance in these areas.

This decline in student loan default rates can be attributed to a number of government initiatives, and these include: credit-screening new loan applicants to be sure loans are not given to students with a history of credit abuse; providing students who have low incomes after they graduate with enhanced opportunities to apply for interest relief on their loan repayments; participating in the tax credit to help students cover the interest costs on student loans; requiring institutions that have very high default rates to help pay for the cost of these outstanding debts; and requiring institutions to give students accurate information about default rates, graduation rates and graduate employment rates by program so students can make informed choices about their studies.

I would like to point out that this government has also put in place a number of student assistance programs that help students in financial need to make it less likely that they will default on their loans. We established the Ontario student opportunity trust fund. Permanent trust funds with a total value of \$600 million, half of which comes directly from the province, have been established at colleges and universities to provide aid to students in need. These funds will provide assistance for up to 185,000 students over a 10-year period.

We introduced annual student grants to help reduce students' repayable loan debts. The Ontario student opportunity grant program ensures that no student incurs more than \$7,000 of debt per year of study. Approximately 39,800 students received grants last year. We now require universities and colleges that increase tuition to set aside a portion of their increased tuition revenues to provide aid to students in need. These bursaries are expected to total \$125.3 million in 2000-01.

The Ontario government also offers scholarships to students to recognize excellence and assist with the cost of post-secondary education. The new Aiming for the Top scholarships recognize high school students with top marks and who have financial need. More than 4,000 scholarships were awarded in fall 2000. Many of the students in my constituency certainly benefited from that and they were quite thankful to the government. In fact, I was quite happy to congratulate them on their achievements.

When fully implemented, \$35 million annually will be invested in these institutions in terms of scholarships that recognize both academic excellence and financial need. Funding for the Ontario work-study plan has been doubled to enable universities and colleges to hire twice as many students and help deserving students complete their studies. Ontario is increasing its support for this program from \$5.4 million to \$10.8 million annually. That's twice as much: 5.4 times 2 is 10.8. The number of students participating in this program will increase from over 3,500 to over 7,000 students.

Ontario graduate scholarships in science and technology assist up to 500 students a year. That's on top of the 1,300 students assisted through the current Ontario graduate scholarships program. In 2001-02, the number of Ontario graduate scholarships awarded annually will increase from 1,300 to 2,000 and their value will increase from approximately \$11,800 to \$15,000 for three terms of study.

It is especially important that we keep post-secondary education accessible at this particular time when we are expecting an increase in enrolment. The Ontario government has been moving forward with a comprehensive plan to prepare Ontario's post-secondary education for the double cohort. The double cohort refers to the graduating class of 2003. I'm personally very attached to that, the reason being my younger daughter, Sonja, who is in grade 10 right now, will be in that double cohort program. I, along with many, many parents, am concerned that we should have enough spaces for our children. I can assure the members in the House, being the PA to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, that we have the resources. I've had discussions with the heads of universities and they've assured us that they already have the spaces and that this will be a program which is going to be handled very, very well.

As the members of this House know, this was a long time coming. Every government previously has had difficulty making tough choices. Everybody knew that Ontario students had to spend an extra year without any good cause. I have visited many, many universities



across North America and across the world. The maximum amount of time kids need to spend in school is up to grade 12. We had an extra year. Not only were students suffering because they were spending an extra year, taking on studies that did not need to be covered in five years of high school, but at the same time we were spending too much money on the education system. This will help us save money so we can spend more money on the current classes and have more teachers for students.

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It's a great program, and somebody had to make that choice—a difficult choice because, politically speaking, sometimes parents were worried and wanted to know whether we were doing the right thing. I want to assure them that we are doing the right thing. We have had consultations with the universities across the province and they are ready.

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River):** "Just trust us."

**Mr Gill:** The members opposite are talking about, "Just trust us." It's very simple. Even at election time—and there will be many elections coming up—there will be programs you will come up with in your red books. Ontarians will look at that, they will look at the pink book or the orange book and they will look at our blue book, and every one of those books will promise wonderful things for Ontarians. But the people of Ontario know where the credibility lies. Any government can make promises but it's the Mike Harris government that proves that whatever they say, they are going to carry out. Some people don't like that, but a promise is a promise—promises made, promises kept.

Coming back to the double cohort, as I said, it refers to the graduating class of 2003, when the first students to complete the new four-year secondary school program will be graduating at the same time as the last students to finish the old five-year program. It is estimated that enrolment in 2005-06 may increase by about 88,000 over 1998-99.

The government's plan includes many initiatives to expand physical capacity of post-secondary education, increase efficiencies and funding, provide financial support to students and ensure that students have the information they need to make informed decisions.

Our SuperBuild initiative, for example, will see an investment by the government and its partners of \$1.8 billion in campuses across Ontario to meet the projected increase in demand for spaces in Ontario colleges and universities. This commitment to renew and expand colleges and universities will create 73,000 new student places.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gill:** You might have thought I was going to refer to the 822,000 net new jobs that we created in the last five or six years. No. I'm now referring to the 73,000 new student spaces that will be provided.

The province has announced 59 new capital projects and funding for modernization and renewal of existing college and university campuses.

The recent SuperBuild initiative is the single largest capital investment in post-secondary education in more than 30 years. The legislation we are discussing today will complement the government's plan to ensure that our post-secondary institutions are ready for the 21st century. What we are talking about today is ensuring that students can afford a post-secondary education, because these students are the future of this province. They will make up the skilled workforce this province needs to attract investment and jobs.

I'm going to digress for a moment and go back and compare what it was previously in terms of two programs, federal and provincial, and how we're going to make it better. I've got a table which I'll be happy to pass on to Hansard. People at home can see that and they can certainly access it through the World Wide Web: [www.gov.on.ca](http://www.gov.on.ca).

Preharmonization—I'll be very brief because I'm running out of time and my friends are ready to take this opportunity—there was one application; there still will be one application. There was an assessment of need conducted. Similarly, there will still an assessment of need conducted.

This is where the difference is: students used to have two certificates of eligibility, two sets of loan documents, and they had to negotiate two loans. Now, under the new program, there will be one certificate of eligibility, one set of loan documents and they'll negotiate one loan. I want to come back to the plan. This program will be serviced through kiosks. Students will really not see any difference. Previously they had to go to their own bank and now they'll go to a service kiosk in their institution. If they're living in a remote place in Ontario, we have an agreement—or we will have an agreement once this thing is passed—with Canada Post, where they can take their documents and Canada Post will deliver the funds by direct deposit or whatever method they want to use.

It's a wonderful thing, and we are committed to ensuring all willing and qualified students continue to secure a place in our post-secondary system. This legislation would ensure that our students continue to have access to the student assistance they require to help manage their portion of the cost of their education.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's certainly my pleasure to follow the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. I think he demonstrates that anything is possible, really. He's certainly one of my better friends. As the parliamentary assistant, he's given me the privilege of speaking somewhat briefly on this topic. I recognize that he's used up most of the time, but he does speak on behalf of the Honourable Dianne Cunningham, who is the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and who has introduced Bill 19. I know that the member is from London North-Centre, the home of the University of Western Ontario, which draws me right back to the whole point.

My middle daughter—I have five children, as many of the viewers would know. My middle daughter was a student at the University of Western Ontario, the home of

the minister. In fact, I believe at one time she met her and has a great deal of respect for the minister as well. This will be sort of the central theme of my few remaining remarks this afternoon. My wife, as you know, is a teacher and I think she is a dedicated, hard-working teacher. These are difficult times for her and for many teachers who are busy trying to be exemplary models to their students.

As it turns out, my daughter who went to Western is now a secondary school teacher. She's actually a first-year high school teacher now. Despite what the viewer might think, she has a small student loan. In fact, she did get one of the Canada millennium scholarships. Of course she went to a graduate program after university and, as such, had been out of the house for four years, so she was entitled to apply for a student loan, which she did. As a student who wanted to work in teaching, she didn't take a job working where she could have made more money. She preferred to take a job in the summer where she got relevant experience. In fact, I believe she worked for the YMCA as a program person, putting on programs for children with special needs. It's that very experience that she got that was invaluable in getting entrance into teaching college.

So all this is about not just the Canada student loan or the Ontario student loan or the bill that we're talking about today. It's an opportunity and decisions that students have to make and indeed families have to make. They're difficult decisions but they are really, at the end of the day, investments in their future. I think that hard work should be rewarded. I think students who work hard may not all perform the same on a test on a given day, but I think teachers and professors are well equipped to evaluate the students' efforts.

1600

The whole background to this document on the training and colleges act and the Ontario Student Loan Harmonization Act speaks to many things to me as a parent. I should say for the record that two of my younger children are still in university. One of them attends the University of Western Ontario. In fact, she's taking a course this summer, which will cost her a fair amount of money. She missed a course in her first year, so she's in Windsor for the summer. My other son, of course, will be doing his fourth year at Brock next year.

To complete the loop, my wife and I work, we have five children, all the major events in life. University is extremely important in our family. Let's put it this way: we think training them for the future, whatever that happens to be—their life—includes college and/or university specifically, but, in a general sense, training, the skilled trades, whatever they choose. We don't dictate, but we've kept that in front of them, and I think all parents should keep that in front of their families. It's a very important commitment to the children on the part of the parents, and some of that involves saving. In that, there's some accountability of the parents, but there's also some accountability—students shouldn't get what used to be called the Ontario stereo assistance plan. That's how it was referred to.

My children, who lived in a rather rigorous household where they have a father like me, were always sort of critical that I kept them on the more frugal side of life at university than some who maybe had more money. I'm very proud of all of them, but my daughter, the one who is a high school teacher, was most resourceful. She worked. She was on the student council at Western; plus she had a job during her school year; plus she volunteered, as I described earlier; plus she maintained adequate marks to get into post-secondary. I used to talk to her. I said, "You know, the first priority is your education; and if there's time left, social; and if there's time left, work to earn some extra money." I'm very proud.

As I said, most of us are parents here, and maybe this is becoming far more personal than necessary. But, to me, we can talk in the rhetoric of statutes or we can talk in the rhetoric of real people making tough decisions. Minister Cunningham is trying to do the right thing, and the Premier yesterday, in responding to a gallery full of—

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** It was terrible.

**Mr O'Toole:** No, Mrs Bountrogianni. You will have your opportunity.

I think in general what he was trying to say, and for the record I'll quote what the Premier did say, is that part of that choice is—years ago, I came from a family where university wasn't one of the primary options. Although I did go to university, it wasn't immediately after high school. I worked but then did go to university. What I'm trying to say is, those choices—back then there wasn't the kind of support. It was the best support program for the upper class back then. All of my friends who were from what we would call the north end—it was in Peterborough, and if you were from the west end you went to university; if you were from the east city you didn't go. That was the reality.

Howard Hampton was trying to make that distinction today. I think the desire is there today. The province has committed that the opportunities will be there as well, and I think that's the commitment I hear the Premier making, and I think Howard would like to provide it free. Absolutely nothing is free. The water isn't free, nothing's free. Not that I wouldn't want it to be free. I think it comes down to who's paying. There must be clear accountability. That really talks about this whole issue, as Mr Gill was saying before, that the government is improving accountability to taxpayers in this debate as well as the students and families.

Minister Cunningham has often said she's committed to providing a place in college and university for every willing and qualified student. That's certainly good news. Through our initiatives on accountability, we are helping students find the right place and the right opportunity at the right time for them, and that really drives it right back to the student. In fact, you could apply this whole argument of mine to the student-focused funding model in our secondary schools today. Students should really be



included, be part of the commentary with respect to extracurricular activities: which ones they want and which ones should be provided, as opposed to, "We're offering basketball," they should say, "We want volleyball." The students should be consulted, and in a general sense that's what this is about.

Mr Gill also reminded us that accountability is one of the government priorities in all sectors and that measures have already been taken to improve accountability on the part of the colleges and universities. I'm going to cover some of those accountability mechanisms. We referred to them in the earlier discussion papers as the KPIs, or key performance indicators, as well as the PDFs, which is performance-based funding.

We were relating that the colleges and universities were going to be funded based on performance. That spells accountability. We were going to fund them on performance to the key performance indicators, which leads to, what are the indicators of successful performance? I think it again comes down to consulting with students, parents and educators so that the program itself has some successful outcome for the student. So students will evaluate their program. That will be one of the key performance indicators. Whether or not they secure a job is another indicator, and whether or not they are able to fulfill their financial commitments is another indicator.

The actual institutions themselves will be evaluated on how many people are engaged in the programs and on how many actually graduate. Students and parents deserve a clear picture of the ability of a college and/or a university to successfully prepare graduates for a job. I get a response from people, "Well, your education system's all about finding a job, blah, blah, blah." Technically that's right. However, I think that in respect to the whole debate, there will be those who argue that education is more than about finding a job. I tend to agree with that group as well. I think life is about choice. It's not necessarily about any guarantees at the end of the day. If, for instance, you take a PhD or something, you may end up in the Ontario Legislature. I'm questioning if that's a key performance indicator or if it's a performance-based kind of thing.

On a serious note, I really think that the choices you make—my undergraduate degree was economics and others would maybe take engineering. I think the chances of a job from engineering, which my oldest boy was in, are far more successful, and they would be more assured of getting a job at the end. In fact, it's more like a trade. Some of the technical, more advanced computers are very specific about finding a job.

The point here is that students, and their families who are advising and in many respects paying for it, need to understand the difference. If you go in thinking that because you get an undergraduate degree or a graduate or post-grad degree in a subject that doesn't necessarily relate to a job—if you get a degree in theology, you could become a very excellent minister, and it's a way of life as opposed to a job. It really doesn't equate to money. Having a PhD does not mean you make \$150,000 a year.

Having a master's degree in engineering—Mr Gill has a master's degree in engineering from the University of Toronto and look how well he's done. I mean that in a serious way. Technically he is a good example of how much variability, flexibility there is in these choices we make. I believe that Mr Arnott, the Speaker in the chair, has a degree in political science. That eminently qualifies him in a number of areas, but those choices and the key performance indicators and the relationship with finding a job are very important decision points for students, parents and families.

For example, in deciding whether to enter a program, as I have described, engineering versus sociology or something, the knowledge that twice as many graduates of program A find a related job as those from program B might be a factor in deciding.

So we're providing evidence of the success rates based on certain measurements from choices that are made by students. At the college level, data are based on surveys of basically two groups: the students and the employers. It is based on graduates, to see if they are satisfied with the quality of the education they received—there weren't some bird courses being offered, of which there still is the odd one—and on whether it leads to a job; it is based on a survey of employers to see if recent grads have the skills and expertise to gain entry to the workforce; and it is based on the information about how graduates have managed in the workplace, as well as managed their resources in repaying their loans. It's the skills which they achieved from the money they were loaned that allowed them to get the job. All of the taxpayers realize that's an entitlement, because those who don't go to school—and there are many of them—don't get the loan and quite often, the evidence is there, frequently getting lower-paying, perhaps less challenging jobs. Not in all cases: as I said before, education doesn't necessarily equate to getting a good job, and not having a post-secondary education does not mean you won't get a job. I think it still comes down to the individual and their motives, their hard work ethic etc.

1610

At the level of university, our students can now review on three criteria: graduation rates, graduate employment rates and Ontario student loan default rates. These kinds of measurements are going to allow students to get a first-hand look at what the evidence is out there. These measures or indicators demonstrate the government's continued commitment to success.

The most recent indicators show that on average 94% of 1998 university graduates had a job in six months after leaving school. That's great news. In other words, there is evidence to indicate that the higher the education the more successful employment opportunities arise. It also relates to income, I might say. There are statistics to support that as well. And 97% of the workforce finds a job within two years. In other words, almost 100% of the students who graduate from university have a job within two years. That's good news and that's important for students to realize, that it's an investment for a job. I

don't care if you're taking philosophy, psychology, you name it: you should realize that at the end of the day you have to work.

I have a son right now who would like to go to graduate school. He hasn't even got good enough marks on undergraduate courses, but he's starting to love the climate and the cultural life of school. I still know a couple of those—in fact, my oldest son is in law school. He went to university and he loved it, he really did, and now he's in law school, which is three or four more years. Hopefully before I leave this world he'll graduate and have a real career. But no, he did serve five years in the armed forces.

*Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** There is a relationship.

Colleges had similar results I might say, so let's not draw any distinction. I think there's great value in education at the college, university and indeed the skilled trades levels.

The final point on this whole thing is that education before, during and after high school is absolutely important. I think all of us would agree the new culture is lifelong learning, and whether there's a certificate that goes on the wall with that is kind of secondary.

I'm of the generation that graduated when grade 13 was departmental exams. We're moving back in some respects to standards like that, which is to an extent a good idea of how you're doing; gives you some idea of how you'd probably do at the University of Toronto. But they were graduating and it was sort of like cross your fingers—wham, 50% of them failed. That was some sort of measurement that maybe they didn't get the calculus, the chemistry or the history they should have gotten.

Standards and standards at the level that we're speaking about today are absolutely critical. They know the universities that are the top-notch universities, and if they don't they should read the Maclean's magazine, which gives a fair, arm's-length assessment of how our post-secondary institutions are doing. I am very proud to say I'm an alumnus of the University of Toronto, but Western Ontario, Queen's University I see here. And I see a few from the school of hard knocks, not to mention Peter. I know he's a lawyer. I don't know where he went, but he probably failed. Nonetheless—

*Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** No, it was Phoenix. Phoenix is kind of a virtual university and basically—

*Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** It has nothing to do with drug testing. I'm not going there.

Actually, it's the highest employment rate of college grads since 1989. But do you know the important thing? This whole accountability argument about collecting data—and I learned a very few things that stayed with me in university but I did learn a couple of things—if you measure things to understand them, measure in order to control, in order to predict to control, by measuring things you can manoeuvre, manipulate or interject to control outcomes and then you can predict the outcomes.

So, by measuring things you're able to understand the process. Then you have to align what your expectations for these outcomes are. When the outcomes aren't jobs, it's very hard to measure, because maybe the people just want to sit on top of Mount Everest and think about the world; I don't know. I have no idea. It's great to have profound thoughts or music or art and all that. I really appreciate and admire it. But the point is that at the end of it, it's all-important to be measured in terms of, has it achieved the successes relevant to the individual?

I do want to go on here a little bit. I think, as I made the point, that in linking funding to performance, we are rewarding schools that do the best job of preparing students to succeed after graduation and to ensuring that colleges and universities are accountable to students and the taxpayer. I don't think it could be said any more succinctly than that. This year, a portion of the \$103-million increase in operating grants was allocated based on the institutions' performance. We should reward positive performance.

Why reward negative performance? What's that got to do with anything? In fact, you should close them. Negative-performing companies, everybody dumps the stock and they're out of business. But what we do with a public institution sometimes is pump more money in to keep it afloat, and it has no accountability or any willingness to measure itself.

Now, that isn't part of the argument on the private university model. I think competition, without it being public, private, whatever—we need to have some measurement of performance. Two per cent of the operating fund grant goes to colleges based on institution performance, as measured by students, employers, after-graduation satisfaction and graduate satisfaction with their education. This apportionment will increase to 4% in the year 2001 and to 6% for the following year. So the message is very clear out there, if you want to get a copy of this: we're going to relate funding to performance and to the key indicators that I mentioned before.

One per cent of university operating grants this year was distributed based on performance, as measured by graduate rates, graduate employment rates some months after graduation and graduate employment rates two years after graduation. This new approach to funding will benefit those institutions that are responsive to the student and the community need for providing relevant and high-quality programs. I might just say one more thing. We should maybe measure it on how many actually stay in Canada, because right now there's a tremendous demand for very affordable, high-quality education in Ontario, and I know many students from the United States are coming here because it's really a very good bargain for them.

I'm just wondering, I'm getting some signals here. How much time will you really need? I could take it all, but I could share some too.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I need about 10 minutes.

**Mr O'Toole:** Certainly, I'll leave you exactly 10. I would say we're looking at a system that is working but



needs further attention. This is just a starting point. Taxpayers' dollars need to be spent wisely. No one in this House, with the exception of Mr Kormos, would disagree with that. I wouldn't put words in his mouth, but I've heard him speak.

Most importantly, these people about to enter the system can select a program and/or course, knowing how previous students felt about the education they received and whether it led to a job. We're providing information for them to make these choices I've referred to several hundred times.

The government has already taken steps to ensure accountability and efficiency in our post-secondary education system, and I am confident that the Ontario Student Loan Harmonization Act, 2001, if passed by the Legislature, will take another big step forward to our goal of ensuring that our young people will be prepared for challenging opportunities in their future.

Perhaps most importantly this afternoon, our government understands the importance of giving students and parents the opportunity and the power to make choices. These are different students with different goals and requirements of every student's needs to make the choices that best suit them and their needs. Quite simply, when students and parents have reliable information about post-secondary programs, they make better choices for themselves and, in fact, for this province of Ontario. It all comes back to the fact that a strong, prosperous economy is related to a knowledge-based economy. We need the young people to have the opportunities, but to achieve that, they need to have the right successes at the right place at the right time.

For taxpayers, performance-based funding and KPIs, or key performance indicators, as I said before, drive accountability for public money, which is right on message with the Deputy Premier, Jim Flaherty, for whom I work, actually; for the Premier, Mike Harris; and in fact for this whole caucus.

1620

It's about accountability. Citizens should have the right to know not only where their taxes are going but what they are being used for and what they're getting in return. When we give the cheque out to the hospital, to the university, to the municipality, to schools, there should be accountability. They should say, "If we get this, you should get that." If there isn't accountability, I question a profession's integrity. At the bottom line, if I say I'm going to provide you a system—

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** That's strong language.

**Mr O'Toole:** It is strong language, and it's language I hold myself to. Maybe it does go too far. No, it doesn't. It doesn't go far enough. We've got to make sure that the culture of entitlement is exchanged for the culture of accountability. In the broader sense, that's what this whole debate is about. I don't quite have enough time to go there, but I will try.

The measures to give taxpayers the tools to hold government and institutions accountable for the use of public money and complement our accountability mechanisms that have been talked about—some would say

they have been talked about for the last few months. Check out Seizing Tomorrow's Opportunities. Check out the whole debate on OJIB, the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board. That's what it was all about. The Road Ahead document is about accountability. It's about having a plan and executing the plan. This government is known—its hallmark is keeping its promises. The promises that are being talked about today—not to the system, not to all the professors and how much time they teach; it's right down to the student. This is what it's about. It's down to the student. In fact, there isn't a person on this side—I just talked about my five kids. Every one of them here, as I look around, are the ones who are buying the registered education savings plans. Mr Hastings spoke the other week about trying to provide more initiatives to encourage parents to save. These initiatives, from private members like Mr Hastings and from other members as well, need to be respected.

The government is not afraid to recognize excellence. In fact, we champion excellence. Excellence is what we're continuously striving for. A continuous search for excellence is really how I think of our time here, arguably since about 1994, when Bob Rae quit governing, gave up control, just threw the money bag out the window and people were scrambling for it. Floyd ran to the vault and locked himself in. In fact, we let him out and put him on the Ontario Energy Board, and now he makes more money. But that's another story.

I said the government is not afraid to recognize excellence, but we're all about accountability. The whole debate today has to go back and be wrapped fully around by Mrs Bountrogianni's comments. I'm waiting for her to speak. I'm not waiting to hear what she says, but more or less just to hear her speak, because she is a professor and she does have an academic view of this.

When the Premier was asked by the leader of the third party, who, by the way, I should say, out of respect—I'm going to step off the script here; actually I haven't got one. Yesterday the leader of the third party asked the Premier a question. It was actually a pretty good question. I give him a lot of credit for good questions. What I have a problem with is his answers. He has no good answers. We've got the answers on this side. The Premier said, when asked about—and this is important for the viewer to see; I'm going to slow it down here, because TV is at three-quarters speed if you're recording it.

The first thing is that we have increased funding and opportunities in matching scholarships. We insisted that universities supply a third of any increase to bursaries. So one third of any tuition increase goes to help students in need. They need to know that. That means that all medical students who need help paying for tuition and ancillary fees above \$4,500 must get it from the universities. There it is on the record.

Second, I can tell you that last year alone there were 572 medical students in Ontario, which, by the way, was up because we created 40 new medical school places. In fact they were cut by the Liberals in 1990. They cut medical schools by 10%. That's why we're short of

doctors today. There were 52 students in the previous year, gone up to 572. Applications are up again this year, to 3,854 students, and we're completing this with 572 spaces. They've gone up 40 spaces, I think.

I might add, as well, that I am not aware of one medical student who needs help. In fact, the Premier asked that if there was a student in need of help, to bring it to his attention.

I want to go over this one thing—I've got about a minute and a half, so don't interrupt—the subsidy, over and above the tuition: for each medical student, \$22,000 goes into that subsidy. That's not seen.

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** You will have your opportunity.

As a matter of fact, there will be \$22,000 for each medical school spot that goes in for the chair, for the lab, for the smaller class sizes. It's invisible money. They don't see it. In addition to that, if parents aren't able to contribute anything and the student can't contribute anything because they have no time to work, it's a very hard course, we pay the \$22,000 on the spot.

In addition, \$10,000 of OSAP, the Ontario student assistance program, is available. By the way, Mr Speaker, and to the viewer, of the \$10,000, \$7,000 will be repayable. So if you have \$7,000 over four years, that's \$28,000, and there is no interest until after you graduate. We're talking about people who are doctors, and they deserve the very best and the highest respect. If they can't pay off \$28,000 in a year or two—it's going to delay the purchase of the Mercedes for a while—then maybe they need a time management or money management program. That's what this is about.

Earlier today Minister Cunningham said in an answer to one of her questions that she has clear evidence—it's on the record in Hansard—that at the University of Western Ontario medical school—she refuted the statistics quoted by Mr Hampton that kids from families with incomes of \$80,000 to \$140,000 are the only ones getting into university. It's wrong and she deserves an apology.

What our system is about is having high-quality, affordable, accountable and accessible education in Ontario.

I regretfully relinquish the rest of my time to the member from our party.

**Mr Gill:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: We are very pleased this afternoon that the family of one of our pages, Melissa Gallant, who is from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, is here this afternoon—grandmother Sandra Gallant; mother Susan; and younger sister Jessica. Welcome.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott):** That's not a point of order but we welcome your constituents to the chamber.

I'm pleased to recognize the member for Simcoe North.

**Mr Dunlop:** It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak on Bill 19, the Ontario Student Loan Harmonization Act. I thank the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for bringing forth this legislation and I thank

the two previous speakers, Mr Gill, parliamentary assistant and member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale—I'm finally going to get that right—and also the member from Durham, for their very valuable comments on this particular piece of legislation.

Today I will be speaking on a very important issue: financial assistance for students in need who want to pursue a post-secondary education.

The Ontario student assistance program is intended to help students from lower-income families meet the costs of post-secondary education by providing financial assistance for educational costs and basic living expenses to eligible students.

As we've heard from my colleague Mr Gill, the Ontario government must ensure that this assistance continues to be available in light of the fact that the national banks will be withdrawing from the business of lending money to students. That is why the government has introduced the Ontario Student Loan Harmonization Act, 2001.

It has been an objective of this government to make the delivery of student assistance more efficient and to ensure that students and institutions are accountable for the tax dollars earmarked for student loans. Mr Gill touched on the issue, and I'd like to elaborate on the measures this government has taken to increase accountability for student loans.

When we first started reporting annually on default rates, the government made a commitment to reduce the student loan default rate to less than 10%. This year's default rate is 15.7%, down from 18.2% in 1999, and compared to 23.5% that was reported in 1997. I am pleased to note that this is the third year in a row that student loan default rates have dropped in this province.

#### **1630**

It is encouraging that the default rate has declined across the system. The rate for university students is 7.1%, down from 8.4% and already below the 10% goal; the rate for college students is 17.2%, down from 20.1%; and the rate for students at private vocational schools is 28.9%, down from 31%.

This decline did not happen by accident. The government introduced a number of important initiatives that brought the default rates down: new loan applicants are credit-screened to be sure they do not have a history of credit abuse; interest relief on their loan repayments is available to students who have low incomes after they graduate; tax credits can now help students cover the interest costs on student loans; institutions that have very high default rates must help pay for the cost of loans defaulted upon by their former students.

Post-secondary institutions must now also give students accurate information about default rates, graduation rates and graduate employment rates by program so students can make informed choices about their studies. This information is available by program for each college and university, and each institution is required to post the information on their Web site for the public to access.

As Mr Gill also pointed out, this government has demonstrated its commitment to helping well-qualified



students get a post-secondary education by introducing student assistance programs and awards programs that help students in financial need manage the cost of their education. For example, permanent trust funds with a total value of \$600 million have been established at colleges and universities to provide aid to students in need. These funds will provide assistance for up to 185,000 students over a 10-year period. Half of the funding for the Ontario student opportunity trust fund comes directly from the province.

The new Ontario student opportunity grant program ensures that no student incurs more than \$7,000 of debt per year of study. Approximately 39,800 students received grants last year.

Colleges and universities that increase tuition must use a portion of their increased tuition revenues to provide aid to students in need. In 2000-01, these bursaries are expected to total \$125.3 million.

High school students with top marks and who have financial need are recognized through the new Aiming for the Top scholarships. More than 4,000 scholarships were awarded in the fall of 2000; \$35 million annually will be invested in these tuition scholarships when the program is fully implemented. The scholarships recognize the hard work and dedication of Ontario's secondary school students and help them get a good start in post-secondary education.

Funding for the Ontario work-study plan has been doubled to enable universities and colleges to hire twice as many students and help deserving students complete their studies. Ontario is increasing its support for this program from \$5.4 million to \$10.8 million annually. The number of students participating in this program will increase from over 3,500 to over 7,000. This program allows students to earn income, work on a schedule that does not conflict with their studies and make a positive contribution to their campus community.

Ontario graduate scholarships in science and technology assist up to 500 students a year. That's on top of the 1,300 students assisted through the current Ontario graduate scholarships program. In 2001-02, the number of Ontario graduate scholarships awarded annually will increase from 1,300 to 2,000 and their value will increase from approximately \$11,800 to \$15,000 for three terms of study. By supporting our brightest graduate students we are making an important investment in Ontario's future ability to research and innovate.

Our government has expanded student aid at almost every level of the post-secondary education system, from providing loans and part-time jobs for low-income students to funding Ontario's top graduate students to help them turn their ideas into reality. Different students need different amounts of funding for different reasons, and like many of our initiatives in post-secondary education, we are increasing the diversity of options available to students.

This legislation is another important step in our government's work to ensure that every willing and qualified student can continue to find a place in college or

university. In short, I think this government has demonstrated a track record of commitment to high-quality post-secondary education and the efficient use of taxpayers' dollars. Passage of this legislation would enable us to continue and build on that record.

Since different people here have talked about their family members, I want to say that my children have graduated from post-secondary education. In my own family, I knew quite early in my daughter's school career that she would probably be going to university and we started at a very early age to save money so that she wouldn't have to take on any kind of loan program or assistance. We made her work in the summer months. She had to be responsible for all of her personal needs. My wife and I, over a period of time—I guess it was over about seven years—saved the money we needed so that she would be able to be debt-free at the end of university. I'm very pleased we were in the financial position to do that. I know not everyone around the province is in that position.

I understand the need for this legislation. I thank the minister for bringing forth this legislation and I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker:** It is now time for questions and comments.

**Mr Curling:** I have a quick comment and maybe a question afterward. I want to compliment my colleagues from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and Durham and also the member from Simcoe North.

The bill's need for a full debate is obvious. This limited bill: you can see why the three members here went beyond the bill, because they were so hungry to talk about the inadequacies of what this government is doing to education that they hardly addressed the issue itself. They went on to talk about other inadequacies and tried to compliment and prop up the government in some respect. It's a recognition, of course, that there is lots more to be done in that regard than bragging about all this direction.

Let me also ask the members, what took you so long to introduce this bill? You had this agreement for two years, sitting there with the federal government, a simple, easy little agreement to harmonize this sort of payment, and it took you from May 1999 to May 2001 to introduce this bill. This is the kind of thing you drag your feet on, because it wasn't important at all to you. In the meantime, many of the students out there continue to be confused as to how to pay their bills and don't know who they're paying them to. You had this for two years, dragging it out. No wonder you couldn't meet for this length of time.

In your response, tell me what took you so long, given that you had all these long holidays and deprived these wonderful pages here of one week of learning more about this Parliament. But they've learned a lot. They have learned that you have reneged on not only your responsibility to education but your responsibility of accountability in the House. I hope that in your response you'll address those issues for me.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On behalf of the New Democrats at Queen's Park and Howard Hampton, I want to respond—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Kormos:** I've been picking up this lingo, you know.

I want to respond to this. I also want you to know that I fought my way to this position this afternoon, to be the person on behalf of this caucus who gets to respond to the Tory and opposition members. It was a bloody battle, but I persuaded my caucus members to let me come here this afternoon to do the members' response. I insisted that the member for Trinity-Spadina stay out of the Legislature this afternoon and wait his turn for his one-hour response to the bill.

1640

Look, I don't care how many times Tories stand up like the Premier did yesterday and talk about how great university and college students have it under this oppressive regime. The bottom line is that increasingly it's only the children of the wealthiest families who get to go to university. The reality is that young people like Jessica Lott sitting in the members' gallery today, a university student, can tell you—could tell every single one of you—what the reality is for young people out there in universities and professional schools, that this Tory government has made it increasingly impossible for children of working class families to pursue post-secondary education.

This government has no interest in developing quality among our youth. This government has every interest in creating a BMW Mercedes-Benz culture so that those children from the wealthiest families get to pursue those professions and earn, yes, the highest incomes. The children from working class families are having the doors to universities and colleges across this province slammed in their faces by Mike Harris and the Tories, with their increases in tuition fees and their abandonment of the youth of this province.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** It's interesting to hear the member for Niagara South, I believe, from somewhere in that region of the great Niagara-Vineland heartland. The proposition the member presents is deliciously misleading in that it suggests that any efforts by government to assist in student assistance are well nigh cancelled by any efforts we undertake to reduce the debt that we know is there from students going into programs. Sometimes they end up not getting the right job coming out of a program, but they have a high debt.

The most interesting comment is the mantra for the member for Niagara Centre, who insists that access is now closed to working class families. That's nonsense, a silly proposition. All I have to do is take him to Humber College and he can do an income survey in the robotics program, as an example. He can do a survey in the business accounting program. He can go to Centennial. He can go to the hospitality program at Niagara College himself and find out that most of the folks there come from a working class background.

The silly proposition that everybody who has access, because of the high tuition fees, are going to be the folks who get a Mercedes—I've never driven a Mercedes, don't want to, don't need to. The point is that if some people want to aspire to that, what's wrong with that? That's our free enterprise society. Our friends across the way would level us to the same level of mediocrity—

**Mr Kormos:** Is that your Jag?

**Mr Hastings:** It must be your Jag, member for Niagara Centre.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** I'd like to respond to the member from Durham and his diatribe of comments earlier this afternoon. He talked about what Premier Harris said yesterday, but he didn't finish, from the Hansard, what Premier Harris said. He basically said that medical students have a \$28,000 loan and that they could pay this off within a few weeks or months—I can't remember exactly what the words were, weeks or months—when in fact all the students who finish medical school then go into residency. Most residencies are under \$40,000 a year. But they are required to start paying off the loan from their medical school. So it's not as if they are already full-fledged doctors, making a lot of money and paying off their loans.

You keep mentioning across the way about the University of Western Ontario ensuring that all their students have the resources to continue in their studies. The average debt is \$75,000 for students finishing medical school at the University of Western Ontario. Those are their numbers; those aren't our numbers. There is some dispute about that research that shows that the average family income of students going to medical school has risen from \$80,000 to \$140,000.

*Interjection.*

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** I agree it isn't a perfect study; it's a survey study. But based on those numbers, the average family income has increased. You do this, too. You do studies based on surveys and universities do studies based on surveys. Yes, the reliability isn't 100%, but the average income has increased.

Other studies from Stats Canada have shown that in three university towns in Ontario in fact the average income in general of all programs, not only medical programs, of families sending their children to university has increased, perhaps not to the extent of this one University of Western Ontario result, but it has increased. I really wish the member for Durham were here to hear my response.

**The Acting Speaker:** The government side has two minutes to reply.

**Mr Gill:** It is a pleasure this afternoon to take part in this debate, where my colleagues the member for Durham and the member for Simcoe North have taken part as well as, in the two-minute hits, the member for Etobicoke North. I appreciate—I don't see the member here; I know I'm not supposed to say that—the member for Scarborough-Rouge River, who spoke on it. I'm going to be referring directly to the inquiry he made because I think it's really important that we stay on the



message. I'll be very happy to answer some of the concerns, the questions they brought up.

The member for Niagara Centre brought up that all the doctors are rich and therefore they drive a Mercedes and this and that. The other day even the NDP was saying, "Frank Stronach is no good, because Frank Stronach, who came in as an immigrant, as a poor person, worked very hard, made millions and along the way he created many, many jobs. He's a great citizen, therefore we take offence." In all defence to Mr Frank Stronach, I think it's unfair. When students who go to medical school and work very hard—take on a number of loans and they have to pay off these loans and they're happy to pay off these loans—go out and buy a decent car, I say more power to them. They deserve it.

On the other hand, the member for Scarborough-Rouge River—and he's back now—asked, why did we not implement this bill earlier on? Why did it take two years for us—the member from Rouge River, I'm answering your concerns.

**Mr Curling:** Who's right here.

**Mr Gill:** Yes. Thank you. We were requested, and it's worth repeating, by the federal government to delay the implementation of this because they were not sure which of the bodies were going to be funding this program.

**The Acting Speaker:** I will caution all members once again that it is contrary to the standing orders to mention another member's absence.

Further debate?

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** I'll be sharing my time with my colleague from Scarborough-Rouge River, Mr Curling, who is here, and my colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence, who is also here. I want to congratulate all members for being here, people, whoever, the few of you who are watching. It is extremely hot in here. I think the member—where's Bert from?

**Mr Kormos:** Perth-Middlesex.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** The member for Perth-Middlesex said it very nicely earlier when he said that farmers treat their animals better than how we're treated in here, because it is extremely hot right now.

**Mr Kormos:** Tell them how stinky it is.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** The member from Welland says it doesn't smell nice here either.

I would like to continue to respond first to the member for Durham, because he said some outlandish things.

Just to continue on Premier Harris's comments yesterday toward the medical students and his promise that if anyone is having difficulty, to come to his office, that he will help them: the Premier made the same promise a year and a half ago, two Christmases ago, to families who were complaining that they didn't have enough money to buy presents for their children. First he denied that that occurred, then he said, "If there is a family that can't buy their child a present, tell them to call my office and we'll buy them a present." I don't think he predicted the number of calls that he would receive.

**Interjection:** A lot.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** A lot, absolutely. Instead of helping, his office gave them telephone numbers of charities.

**Mr Kormos:** Shuffled them.

1650

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** Shuffled them off; thank you. He shuffled them off. A lot of people got presents from charities that were already giving them presents. The fact is, the promise was to give presents to the poor, because he couldn't believe there were that many. When he realized how many there were, he just buried it. It was all over the papers. It was ridiculous. He made a similar promise yesterday which will again come to haunt him, because there will be students. As they call us, they will call him, and what will he do? Refer them to food shelters? Refer them to other banks? What will he do? I'm really curious to see what your leader will do.

The member for Durham talked about performance indicators and that "we shouldn't reward negative performance." Well, not only do we not even know if we are reinforcing negative performance; we don't know what we're reinforcing with these performance indicators, because they have been found to be invalid. There is no significant difference between those that scored well on them—the colleges and universities—and those that scored poorly. The margin of error was greater, which means you are funding this—as you call it—extra operating grant money by chance. So even the universities and colleges that received this extra money knew they shouldn't get too happy about it because they knew that next year at the same time they may not get any, again by chance. The minister herself almost a year ago said, "We have to look at these indicators. We know they need work." Nothing. It's May—nothing, and the universities and colleges are waiting with bated breath for Wednesday's budget to see what in fact will be there for colleges and universities.

I want to reiterate that the University of Western Ontario's medical school has told us that the average debt of medical school students finishing there is \$75,000, not the \$28,000 that Mr Harris quoted yesterday. The \$28,000 is what they can get a loan for from OSAP, but the actual debt, the average debt of medical students, is \$75,000. There were students here yesterday who predicted \$100,000-and-up loans.

I wanted to respond to the comments that were made by the member for Durham and I'll get back to the bill now, which is what he was supposed to be talking about or at least partly talking about. On this side of the House we support this bill that harmonizes OSAP with the Canadian loans—absolutely support it. We wonder why it took so long but we do support it absolutely. Anything that simplifies life for a student is something that Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party support.

We realize it'll take time. I had a great briefing last week from the minister's bureaucrats on this new bill and I appreciate it. I thank Helmut and everybody in the bureaucracy and we support it. But does this new bill reinstate OSAP to part-time students that this government

cut? Does it reinstate the extra loan forgiveness that this government cut, so forgiving less of the loan? Or does this bill restore the spirit of the Canadian millennium fund, which was supposed to be over and above what the provincial government gave to the students? It doesn't do that. We know that. The minister has actually confessed and said, "Yes, we have every right to be doing what we're doing." And what you're doing—in case the people of Ontario don't know, those who don't have students who have received this fund from the Chrétien government—is what you would have given in loan forgiveness over and above the \$7,000 that they borrow per year. You just give this millennium fund. You say, "Hey, you got it from the feds. You don't need it from us." The net value to the student is zero.

It's really too bad that the member for Durham isn't here. He mentioned that one of his children did receive this fund. I'd like to know how his son is feeling about this sucking of the millennium fund that was supposed to be over and above what your government owes him.

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's the second time I've heard from the other side another mention, and I know that both sides have been doing it, about members being here or not being here. You did stand up not too long ago and say it's inappropriate. I would ask the member opposite to withdraw her comment.

**The Acting Speaker:** I again remind all members that we are breaking the standing orders if we continually refer to another member's absence. I would ask all members to respect the standing orders.

**Mr Kormos:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Let's solve that problem of members not being here and count for a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** It's not a point of order. I will now again recognize the member for Hamilton Mountain.

**Mr Kormos:** On a point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Another point of order? Do we have a quorum in the House?

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** I recognize again the member for Hamilton Mountain.

**Mrs Bountogianni:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I do retract that. I see the member's jacket and I actually do wish to see him. That was my motivation, but I will refrain from doing it again. He mentioned that he wanted to see me speak, not what I had to say, he said, but just to see me speak, but I will refrain.

The millennium fund: I am curious to see what any student feels about this that I haven't spoken to so far. The students I have spoken to really find it insulting that the spirit was that over and above what the government was to give was taken away. In fact, for some students it's a net loss because the Canadian millennium scholarship is taxable.

I see the member opposite and I supported his bill—was it last week? a whole week has gone by—on the RESP improvement, and this again denies a student the spirit of this, which was to help them with an additional \$3,000.

Is there anything in this new bill that talks about how much OSAP will have to be increased to help the private university students? You will be giving them OSAP in the private university colleges and the extra private corporations that you will allow in as a result of the private universities bill. How much extra OSAP will have to be in the budget for students to go to these corporations? There was nothing in the bill about that.

There was nothing in this bill or in the throne speech about many things, and we'll be listening very carefully during the budget to hear that.

Those are the comments I have for a certain member's comments.

I'd like to talk a little bit about OSAP. I want to reiterate that we support any bill that makes it easier for students to get an education in this province, but over the past decade students have been burdened with increasing debt loads. Tuition has increased by 60% under this government, and due to the demographics there has been a 35% increase in student enrolment, while there has been a 39% decrease in funding with respect to the community colleges. However, over the past five years the amount of loan assistance available to students has decreased by \$500 million. I often hear opposite how much the loan assistance has been increased, but when you consider the number of students, per student there's actually a decrease.

The harmonization of the student loan program is one measure that will help students, and we support it. Anything that benefits the working families of this province is something we support. But this simple harmonization is insufficient to address the oncoming crisis in the post-secondary system in Ontario.

Without a significant investment or re-investment of funds, our system will stay 59th out of 60 states and provinces on the continent. We currently only sit at 59th, just above Bush's Texas. Harmonization makes it easier to borrow, but it does nothing to address the real needs of students.

There is one positive thing that has come out of this government in the last few months, and that is Portals and Pathways, the review of the post-secondary education task force. I think everyone was surprised this task force came up with the results it did. Now we are waiting to see how much of this report will be implemented.

One of the most interesting, and probably upsetting to the Tories, aspects on this report is its strong recommendation for increased funding in post-secondary education. This is your own task force. Assessing the adequacy of government funding did not fall within the mandate of this task force, and yet a significant portion of the report addresses this, is dedicated to this. This task force, by the way, was supposed to look at potential inefficiencies within the university and college system.



What this task force found very easily is that Ontario's post-secondary institutions are both cost-effective and innovative, efficient and fiscally responsible. However, according to the report, we are at a crossroads. The projected revenue gap threatens the very survival of Ontario's post-secondary institutions.

1700

In order for growth needs to be met, additional sources of revenue beyond tuition fees will need to be found. Tuition fees make up a larger share of total institutional revenues today than at any other time during the 1990s.

Institutions are aging. Deferred maintenance costs stand at \$900 million in the universities and \$300 million in the colleges. These are deferred maintenance costs. This isn't the need for new buildings.

Based on current levels of operating funds per student, the task force estimates that the revenue required to meet the projected enrolment increase of 88,000 students by 2005 is \$481 million. This estimate does not include the revenue necessary to deal with inflationary pressures, matching post-secondary investment in competitive jurisdictions, physical plant, improving student services or new learning technologies. This is simply what is needed over and above what is given to address the demographics.

The Ontario colleges are a success story according to this report. We agree on this side of the House. If only the opposite side of the House was more like their predecessor Premier Davis, who started the community colleges. It was a vision that everyone deserved an education in this province. However, according to the Tory task force report, the colleges are not well equipped to respond to the pressures of increased enrolment, faculty recruitment and capital needs.

Eligibility thresholds for OSAP have been raised. Loan forgiveness eligibility has also increased. These two changes, say the task force writers, have resulted in students having greater difficulty acquiring student loans and higher debt loads for those who do qualify. This report in many ways contradicts the Premier's own statements yesterday.

The regulations of the OSAP program are poorly communicated—if this bill begins to address that through the kiosk, as the member opposite talked about, we would support it—and there are long waiting periods for students who want to know if they qualify and how much assistance they will receive.

There will not be significant financial savings from the amalgamation of Ontario post-secondary institutions. The task force believes that there will be little benefit to forced mergers. There are some key recommendations from this report that I hope the government heeds. It is your own report.

Change the governance and administrative structure of the colleges by creating a new college charter. With respect to being more accountable, track and monitor performance indicators, but develop a common set of performance indicators and benchmarks of best practice to provide a consistent set of measures. This task force,

although its mandate was to look at possible inefficiencies through their consultations, found that performance indicators also need to be changed.

There should be a one-stop entry portal. I believe you were talking about that with respect to this bill. But it should also be that way for anything to do with post-secondary institutions. There are so many programs. Some students believe that they're going into one program when in fact, halfway through, they realize it is not for them. The more we can give them before they enter post-secondary the better.

According to the Tories' task force, information on all institutions, financial aid, and transfer regulations and arrangements would be easily accessible to students and their parents.

*Interjection.*

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** But I can't comment on that. There should be a seamless transfer system—we support that as well—to assess and evaluate existing transfer mechanisms; in other words, credits from university to university, from college to college and from college to university. There are some great partnerships out there, but there isn't consistency across the province.

The report says that collaborations should have system-wide applicability and that certain institutions—and they say especially in the north, in the rural areas and francophone institutions—should adopt collaborative arrangements.

A transformation incentive fund should be established: This fund will be used to foster innovation and the adoption of best practices in the areas of student centre services, institutional improvements and sector-wide improvement strategies. This fund would operate over a five-year period with \$80 million a year allocated to this fund. An advisory panel would review funding proposals and provide advice to the government.

I hope the member from Durham is listening now, as he said he wanted to hear this.

Student services should be improved. Library services, for example, have gone downhill. They do what they can, they share resources across the library system, but here is where the cutbacks have really hurt.

Special-needs students need more assistance at the post-secondary level, according to this report. The former finance minister, Ernie Eves, did give some money due to the untimely and tragic death of his son, Justin. As a memorial to his son, he did give money for special-needs post-secondary students, and that was appreciated. I was in the sector when that was given, and that was appreciated. But according to this report, more money is needed for special-needs students in post-secondary, and improved scholarship assistance.

I spoke earlier about the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. This report, your report, says, "allow first-year students to qualify for the national Canadian millennium bursary." Don't start at second year, start right at first year, because quite frankly that's when they need it most. They've only had two months to work instead of four. That's when they most need whatever help we can give them.

It says, "Develop government and institutional policies to reduce student debt load and defaults. Special attention should be paid to retaining 'at-risk' students." What happens now with the data from at-risk students—in other words, students who drop in and out—is that the institution is punished. One of those terrible indicators shows, "Oh, this many students didn't finish this year."

Lives are complicated. Sometimes it takes more than two years to finish a two-year diploma. The institution should not be punished, as it is now, with its funding source because students decide to take a detour, for whatever reason, to finish their degree.

It says there should be more differentiation and specialization among post-secondary institutions. This report, curiously enough, recommends establishing a polytechnical model within a new college charter. The association of college students, though, warns us and wants us to be cautious that if indeed this polytechnical model is adopted, it should be in the best interests of the student, not of the institute per se.

This Tory task force report says that targeted funding should be given to special populations to allow them full access to education opportunities, and repeats that the access and remediation role of colleges to accommodate special populations needs reinforcement, needs more support. In short, your own task force is saying you have been inadequately funding post-secondary institutions. This bill, although welcome—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. The member for Hamilton Mountain has the floor.

**Mr O'Toole:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As part of the quorum count, I want it to be noted for the record the member for Durham is here, and I was always watching it on television to hear the—

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

I would like to again recognize the member for Hamilton Mountain, who has the floor.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** I took back what I said, and I'm glad to see you here.

In conclusion—I would like to give my colleague his turn now—your own report says you're underfunding colleges and universities. This bill is great. We support it. It's going to make it easier for students to get loans. But it's not going to solve the problems with post-secondary institutions.

**Mr Curling:** I want to commend my colleague from Hamilton Mountain, who is so well-informed about education issues. Actually, the Conservative government should be consulting with her each day. You would learn so much of what education is about and the direction you should be going. I think that would be light and hope for the students of this province. We are actually blessed to have the member for Hamilton Mountain in our caucus.

1710

This is about Bill 19. You heard what my colleague said: "It's a good bill. It's a limited kind of bill. We support the bill."

If we're talking about harmonizing the Canada student loan and the Ontario student loan. Mr Speaker, at your young age, you can remember, very much so, paying your bills on time at the bank, wherever. You paid your money and you were not quite sure if it was going to the Canada student loan or to the OSAP loan. Sometimes you overpaid your Canada student loan and the bank itself got so confused they didn't even transfer the money over to OSAP. Then the student is called and harassed and harangued all the time that they are in deficit on one side when they overpaid on the other side.

It was an inefficiency of government over there, not getting their act together. Now they're bringing a bill here and saying, "Guess what? We've just about got our act together," although they had almost two years in which to do that. From May 1999, this agreement with the federal government was in place.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Curling:** They're getting sort of agitated over there, saying, "The federal government asked us not to do it." I don't know when this Tory government, the Mike Harris government, listened to the federal government. Every now and again, I notice now in the House, they are quoting Paul Martin and talking about the brilliant aspect of his direction as the Minister of Finance, and sometimes Jean Chrétien.

Here you are now, you've had an agreement two years. You sat on your rumps the whole time and did nothing about it. But who was being punished? The students.

We, of course, will support this. We support this because, as you said, it brings together the harmonization of these two loans, the confusion that is going on. But it raised some questions for me. They said, "Here's an opportunity now to ask to maybe discount this and allow other institutions to buy this debt." The banks are saying, "Let us get out of this. It's so bad, let us get out of this." It will take some time before they get out of this mess. The banks are saying, "Get somebody else to do that."

And then you see what happens. They're going to discount this amount of money and sell it off to other institutions. You know how it works. It almost reminds me of Highway 407. If you discount this amount of money and sell it off to someone else, somebody is paying for this, because they borrowed this money before and they will discount it and other institutions will get it. So I wonder too, who is paying for that indebtedness? I just wondered. But maybe you don't have to go too far. It's the working class people who again have to dip into their pockets to pay for this government and their misdirection of how they do things.

Do you know what this bill doesn't do? It does nothing to address indebtedness of students. Since 1995—and you can recall, Mr Speaker—this government has raised tuition fees; about a 45% increase since they have been in power. As a matter of fact, this legislation they're bringing in doesn't really tell us anything, because they say, "The regulations will tell you how we're going to go about it." Of course, they say, "Trust us." We



have been trusting this government. Many of the people have been doing this a long time. They have trusted them to the point that tuition fees have been increased 45%.

Look at these wonderful young people here today, the pages. You know, I am concerned about them because by the time they are ready for university—and if this government is in power until that time, it's quite possible the tuition fees would be raised maybe 100%. So mom and dad and everybody will have to be working pretty hard to get that money in order to make sure that they're at school and have access to post-secondary studies to get a good job.

Right now, my two daughters have finished university and I'm happy and proud of them, but I'm not so happy that there is a debt of about 20-odd-thousand dollars for their first degree. My other daughter has a second degree and has a great debt on her hands right now. As a matter of fact, it's necessary to have this education. So I am concerned about our young people. If this government continues to be in power—we will make sure that doesn't happen. We'll make sure that we have a Liberal government, and the member for Hamilton Mountain, who has much more insight and much more sensitivity for the concerns here.

So the fact is, while we welcome this harmonization bill, it does nothing to address that indebtedness.

I want to touch on a very particular area. People who had gotten student loans from the government really had confidence in the fact that they would get a nice job in their area of training or education. The government of the day, the Minister of Finance, had announced the direction of the economy, where it was going and the prosperity of that direction, and some people invested in that direction. Lo and behold, after acquiring that, with a lot of money and debt, the opportunities in their profession fell flat. And who is going to pay for that, for the sometimes bad decisions of government? The individuals, the students who have a debt of 20-odd-thousand dollars for their first degree.

You heard, of course, the First Minister, the Premier, state emphatically here that within a couple of months of doing medicine, you can pay for the amount of money you get. I think it was such an insulting way to address a concern of students who are saying, "We're extremely indebted by the time we complete our profession." He said, "Oh, the amount of money they get, they can pay that off." They were in shock. They came to hear the Premier respond to a very intelligent question, a very concerned question, and that was what he said: "You can do that."

He also alluded to the fact that there is no problem at all about access to education. All those who want the education can come forward to post-secondary institutions and be accepted. That may be so academically, but we weren't addressing academic access for the millions of wonderful students we have; we were addressing financial access. Many working-class families cannot afford the increased tuition fees that have been put on by this government, denying them the opportunity to be successful.

You have the Minister of Community and Social Services saying, "I want to get them out to work and I want to get them literacy," and what have you, but in the meantime there is a sort of non-access to post-secondary institutions because of the financial ability to do so.

I would say to this government, sure, you can bring a bill in here for harmonization that is simple and easy, but where are the other concerns you should be addressing? This government has a very bad reputation for implementing things. We will study things, we will have all kinds of task forces doing things, it will be right in their hands, but nobody implements it.

I understand that in your budget speech, in step 14 of your budget, you talked in a creative way about implementation of training institutions and what have you. The next step I would suggest to you is to implement, implement things like access to trades and professions that have been around since 1989. It's all here. Forget about all the studies. They're done already. You don't have to spend any more money or anything else; just implement it. That's the next step. The next step is to implement, but we don't get that done by this government. They will talk and they will create another bureaucracy, another institution, another building in order to talk about training, but here are people who need to access their profession, because they are trained.

The other aspect we always keep addressing here every day is the fact that in Canada or in Ontario we have the brain drain nonsense. We have one of the greatest brain gains in North America: all those wonderful individuals whom you have asked to come to this wonderful country. It's a great country, with all the great professions: the doctors, the lawyers, the engineers, the nurses, all those with their professions. They were trained in their own native countries. Money was spent on the education of these individuals who come here. So we gain. Some of them who have left and gone to the United States are the people who got their training somewhere else and said, "We cannot get ahead here, so we'll go down south." In the balance of debit and credit and what have you, Canada and Ontario have had a brain gain, but what the government has done is played politics with it all and not implemented the basic things about those who can access a trade and profession.

1720

So I do get concerned that we have simple bills and then we speak beyond the facts, because we're hungry for real legislation to come in, to move forward in a good direction. We spend months getting into the House—months. We have not been in this House for months. We are eager, especially this opposition, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals here are eager to get on with the business of Ontario, to get people to work, to get people in their professions, to get the economy going, to address some concerns with teachers and to address concerns with the hospitals that have been in chaos since this government has taken over. But, oh, no, they sit back home and nothing happens. We couldn't them here to even debate those things, to carry on the duties that we

are given to do by the mandate we're given by our constituency.

The fact is that I feel very strongly that while they drag their feet to do these things, the chicken will come home to roost one day—and it is coming to roost. We'll have this government out very soon. Sometimes democracy is a slow process, but the waiting itself can be quite rewarding. Our reward in the next year and half or two is to see Mike Harris and this government out through the door with the dictatorial way in which they do things.

I have a couple of questions which I want to put to this government. First, I'm not very convinced that we are doing very well about our students in the province of Ontario. I think that lots more can be done. We talk about counselling in the area of high schools. The counselling that happens in the high schools is academic counselling. There is no professional counselling, no career guidance of where students should go. Many of them are talking about credits or what you should have, but the fact is that students should be given more counselling in the direction of a professional career in which they should go. I would like them to address that.

The other area that I was extremely concerned about is that when the legislation came out some years ago, students who had great debts, student loans, could not declare bankruptcy. There are students who are indebted to the hilt, unable to move on with their lives. Big business, Eaton's and all that, could declare bankruptcy if they want, but the individual, who may find it extremely difficult to move on with their life, is burdened and the fact that they cannot declare bankruptcy is being legislated. Some people cannot get out of that rut for years. They may never get out of that rut, and live in a bankrupt situation all their lives.

I would like to see this government address that concern, but they welcome all of that, in a way. If you want to take the burden off students, that indebtedness, address that bankruptcy act, in which they say that students cannot declare bankruptcy, even if they are poised to be going in that direction.

I mentioned before, who's going to pay for all of this indebtedness that we're going to have when we do sell off this kind of money to other institutions and all that? Of course, the regulation doesn't tell us what the procedures are and how they are going to discount this sort of money. I'll just give you an example and I'm just going to use figures as an example. If the student loan indebtedness outside is, say, \$100 million, I'm sure they're going to have institutions coming in that are ready to buy it for maybe \$65 million. Then that deficit that is there, they're going to say, "Where did all that money come from?"

I'm not as brilliant as my colleague for Scarborough-Agincourt, who really has the debit and credit thing all balanced. But I saw him shaking his head and I said, "Yes, he's concerned by the fact of, where is that indebtedness going to be paid?" Because what happens is, we discount the money, we maybe sell it off to some

of the friends of Mike Harris, who say, "Give me that money and I personally will make sure that we collect that money."

Many students and families and have called me constantly in my constituency office to say to me the hounding and the harassment of collectors are driving them crazy. When I say to them to call Management Board in this respect, they don't get any kind of support. But I hope that there is some support for those people who need some sort of counselling when they have an indebtedness to their student loan and want to go on with their lives. I strongly believe that if this government wants to address the issue of students, it should look at that great indebtedness they have, look at the fact that they have increased tuition fees 45% since 1995. That in itself brings hardship to families and everyone else who is involved with education.

We know, of course, that it is one's human right to be able to access affordable education. But many of these things are just spoken words. They're not implemented and they're not supported. There is posturing all the time by the government about what they'd like to do with students and what they can do, but this does not really happen at all. The Minister of Labour should be extremely concerned by the fact that he gets a skilled workforce coming in here. But I should tell the Minister of Labour that what is needed is that people be able to afford that training and not be indebted by this huge, huge debt that is bestowed upon them with no great assistance from this government.

You can't actually give it with one hand and take away so much with the other hand. When I went to college, I recall that it was \$72.50 to do five credits. That wasn't even long ago. Today, by golly, you couldn't pay for one credit with the kind of money it took to go to Seneca College at that time, and when I went to York it was not even that expensive. Today students are faced by such a great debt that by the time they are through with all their education, they have an even greater debt on their hands than having a mortgage on a house. There is a larger debt sometimes than a mortgage on their house. They are not able to proceed and progress through their lives.

I want to say, in support of Bill 19, which is such a simple bill that was hanging around for the last two years and is just coming before us, about harmonizing the Canadian student loan and the OSAP programs: while we welcome that, it is far from addressing the deeper concerns we have and that students have in making sure they can have access to good education.

I will now give my time to my colleague.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** It's a pleasure to follow my colleague from Scarborough-Rouge River, on the banks of the beautiful Rouge; and also my colleague from Hamilton Mountain, the home of McMaster University, that wonderful institution not only of Canadian renown but of international stature, especially for its medical school; also the members across the way who have spoken forcefully to this bill. I



certainly commend them for participating in the debate, especially the member from Durham, who always has something interesting to offer, and the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

This Bill 19 is certainly a good first step toward stabilizing the student loan situation in this province, because obviously students cannot complete university without that kind of assistance. It's just not doable. No matter what income bracket students are in, it's a challenge to try to get the money together, not only to pay for tuition; I think there are new, increasing incremental costs. When you were in school you didn't have to pay a couple of thousand bucks for a computer and all the software and updating. So students now not only pay for their books but they're supposed to pay for the hardware, the software, and that's another added cost. Then you have to pay for Internet access at home—another cost.

There are certainly a lot of added costs to being a student, for instance for housing. There was someone in the paper this week talking about living in a basement apartment here in the city of Toronto, I think, at \$1,500 per month accommodation that three or four of them were sharing. So accommodation is a lot more expensive than it used to be. Certainly in all university cities accommodation is expensive. My youngest son is at Queen's, just finishing first year, and it's quite expensive for them. Now they're renting a house, so on top of the utilities and the rental, tuition, books, computers—those costs are formidable, because they're after-tax dollars for a family. There are very few write-offs for families or for students. If you add that all up, they certainly need as much support in terms of loans, grants, scholarships, bursaries, and certainly in terms of keeping tuition down.

1730

One of the things I agreed with, that the Premier said yesterday—I don't agree with a lot that he said, but one of the points he did make was that there is quite a substantial cost to educating students in post-secondary streams in Ontario and all over Canada. Sometimes we as Canadians or Ontarians take for granted the fact that there are huge costs. I think the Premier referred to \$22,000, or whatever, per student in medical school. But there are costs there, and that comes from the tax base and is shared by property taxpayers as a whole. I don't think we as Canadians, Ontarians, sometimes take full consideration of the costs that governments put up and taxpayers in general put up to make education affordable.

As you know, the opposite of that is the American experience. It's not unusual for an American student to pay US\$20,000 or US\$30,000 for one year at Stanford, Dartmouth, MIT—the top schools. Twenty thousand, and that's not unusual. We, on this side of the border, have had a tradition of government support to keep tuition low, to make it totally accessible. I think it's a laudable tradition, and we, as Canadians and Ontarians, should be proud we've had that open-door policy here. It's something we don't want to let go of, and something that I think we want to enhance, even though the challenges are quite significant if you look at what's happening to students in Ontario today.

There's been a 45% increase in tuition, and, there's no doubt about it, a mindset change is taking place. Where students 20 or 30 years ago would automatically think, "I go to high school, and then I go to university," now they're beginning to say, "Maybe I go to high school. Maybe I go to college. Maybe I go to university," because they know you no longer pay \$1,000 for tuition. Now that tuition could be up to \$8,000, plus the ancillary costs I talked about. So a mindset change is taking place in our schools.

As you know, Mr Speaker, I was fortunate enough to teach in some of the finest high schools in this province for 18 years, so I've been there and I've seen the change. I have a brother teaching high school, and I talk to him regularly about the challenge he has and the differences that have taken place.

When people were speaking here, I can recollect that there were students of lesser means. I know you were involved with ice hockey, and you saw a lot of Toronto kids who were able to get scholarships to Dartmouth or to play hockey at Michigan Tech. They got a great education because of their hockey skills. Many of the students who went to United States universities were given scholarships based on their athletic ability. As much as we condemn the Americans for that type of thing, I was always a great proponent of it. I thought that if a young man or woman had certain skills—and it is too bad it was restricted, in the most part, to athletics and mostly to males. As you know, now it's opening up. We're getting volleyball scholarships, track scholarships for young ladies and young men. That's part of the whole education process. Whether it's athletics or drama or being able to play an instrument like the violin, your excellence should be rewarded and recognized.

I was referring to a lot of these athletes who went to the States. Many of them were of very moderate means. They would never have gone or thought of going to university unless that aid was there. As a result of that aid being there, they got a great opportunity. Take a look at Jim Corrigan from Scollard Hall, who came from a poor working class family in North Bay. He got to go to Kent State, got a great education, played football, raised a family. There are countless examples of that. I remember even in my own school, St Michael's College School, where a couple of students went on to Princeton, a couple went to Yale, a couple went to Colgate—I remember students from a very poor single-parent family were allowed to go to Cornell. They are now working in the States and in Canada and doing very well. They had limited financial resources at home. They couldn't have done it without financial help at home. But because of their athletic abilities, special talents they had, they were able to get an incredible education, for instance, at Cornell. They're better people for it, they're exposed to the rest of the world, and they've got this excellent life, you might say a passport to go wherever they want. They show that degree, they can get a job, they get respect.

I think that's the type of thing we should promote more in Ontario. We do have excellent schools here,

whether it be Queens, Western, McMaster, York or Toronto. These are excellent institutions which we should appreciate more. That's why I certainly favour as much government support of these excellent institutions as possible, because they are our ticket to being competitive, not only in North America but internationally. If we invest in universities and invest in these students and in the faculties to be able to do research, we are going to be competitive in almost every field.

We should continue to understand that this is not an expenditure on these students, whether it be in OSAP or in scholarships or lower tuition; it is an investment in the future of Ontario. More Ontarians should appreciate the fact that this is what your tax dollars are doing. This is what OSAP is doing. It is investing in the future of the students and in the future of your province and your country. You cannot progress, get involved in cutting-edge research in the biotech field or in engineering unless you've got this kind of excellence.

That's one of the reasons why I referred to the American example. As I said, there are certain things I dislike about the American system, but they do place a heavy emphasis on education in the post-secondary sector. Once a child reaches kindergarten, you might say, they talk about investing in that college education for that boy or girl. They are very focused on that and their culture is focused on that. It is one of the reasons why the Americans have done so well internationally in a competitive fashion, because their universities are heavily subsidized corporately, their fundraising drives, their profile.

I know we laugh. Again I go back to the sports analogy. Sometimes we laugh at the Big Ten basketball or we laugh at Duke and all these schools, but that's marketing. They're marketing these institutions. The institutions are marketed so that the kid living in Harlem or the kid living in Hamtramack or the kid living in Santa Clara, that boy or girl says, "Hey, I know about Duke. I want to go to Duke. It's a great school. It's a great place." There's a sense of excitement in the post-secondary future that they see in front of them.

There's nothing wrong with us as Canadians and Ontarians maybe having a bit of that attitude and learning from the Americans, who really are trying to tell us, "Hey, if you want to get ahead and you want to get to a point where you develop excellent forms of new medical technology, medical microsurgery and genetic research, invest in these kids. These kids will make the breakthrough. They will. They're the ones who can do it."

The only thing that I fear is happening in Ontario is that there's going to be a lot of superb minds that won't be able to give us back that intelligence because of the cost of education, which is creeping up in this province, that is going to make a lot of working families and a lot of young people say, "Well, I can't do it because of the money. I won't be able to afford all these costs and I can't afford the debt."

I'm not trying to be critical of the government per se, but I'm just saying this is something that is very much on

the minds of young people. There is the reality of these added costs. I fear that many of these students, who in some cases, by the way, may not be A students in high school and won't be able to get the top scholarships or bursaries—sometimes there are students who have slight dyslexia, they have home situations, whatever it is, where they weren't able to focus on education, which is quite common.

In a lot of the schools in Toronto, students have two or three jobs, so maybe their marks aren't up to scratch. But that student probably is capable of going to university and on to post-graduate school and maybe being a top biochemical engineer, someone who will make breakthroughs in heart surgery. But they won't be given that chance because perhaps their marks weren't quite there, their parents didn't have the money, and the cost of tuition and books and computers made it prohibitive for them to get there. That is no doubt happening.

1740

I think a lot of these students who come from, let's say, the working class areas of the city and of the province are not going to be able to fulfill their dreams, fulfill their full potential. We, as elected officials, as part of the Legislature and the government, should try and do everything we can to open doors for these students and not preclude giving them a chance to show their teachers or the university faculties what they can do. As we sit right now in Ontario, I think there is a regression, where more and more students are not even looking at this option and their families are saying no.

As I mentioned, I have a brother who teaches at a school in the old city of York, at Rogers Road and Weston Road, if you know that area. It's a gateway community. In his school 90% of the students don't have English as a first language at home; 90% speak another language besides English at home. The tragedy is that in that school, and there are many bright kids, many of them do not aspire to go to university because of the income level, because they feel their parents can't afford to put them through. They see their parents at home struggling to pay the rent, to pay the mortgage, to put food on the table. For them to dare say to their parents, "Hey, listen, I'm going to go university and not work, and go into debt," they wouldn't even dream of it.

Basically school doesn't become a priority because they're working delivering pizza, they're working waiting on tables. Quite commonly, they work with their parents at night cleaning offices. This is quite common in Toronto. They work after school and they go at night with their parents and clean office buildings. How can that student come to school the next morning at 9 o'clock and be sharp and able to do assignments, never mind where they would find the time to do homework because they're working with their parents cleaning office buildings at night?

Among those children are all kinds of undiscovered treasures, whether it be at Archbishop Romero or schools like Lawrence Park in my area or schools like Etobicoke. If we give a bit of encouragement and help them financially and let them know there shouldn't be a financial



barrier to coming to school and staying in high school and going to university, we will not lose these natural treasures we have in our schools. They are there. They are in every classroom, in every school, and somehow we've got to, as government, make it very possible that all these students with potential be allowed to go to university or college and excel in whatever they do. It is not automatic that they will go to school just because they're bright. We need to give them those open doors.

I know the amazing things that go on in our schools. In here we generally dwell on some tragic things that sometimes happen. We went through that strike situation. If you visit our schools, you see the brilliance of young people. I was at a school two weeks ago on Earth Day. It was Chaminade high school at Keele Street and Queens Drive. I hadn't been in a school in years and I went in there. Do you know what they were doing there? They had a brown trout fish hatchery in the school. They built it on their own in an old equipment room. They had a fish hatchery where they had 4,000 brown trout they had got from Duffins Creek. They went there, and as they told us this: if you shock the trout in the creek, then what happens is they squeeze the eggs right out of the trout that are there and then they bring them back to the hatchery, and now they had 4,000 little brown trout in the school. Do you know what they were doing with those 4,000 brown trout? They were going to put them in, of all places—I know the Minister of Labour knows—Black Creek.

Everybody thinks that Black Creek is some kind of open sewer. These kids pulled out 500 shopping carts from Black Creek, they pulled out tonnes of garbage, everything under the sun, and they were rebuilding the banks of Black Creek and putting 4,000 trout into Black Creek. They were doing it because they found it interesting, they found it fun and they found it educational.

Nobody talks about those great stories that take place in our schools. That is one example. I'm sure there are examples right across Ontario of some of the wonderful things that are being done by students if you encourage them, if you inspire them and if you give them some kind of wherewithal to do it.

That's the type of thing we, as government, should try to encourage and reward in our schools. If there is excellence, reward them, give them the chance and ensure that those students who are so interested in natural biology go to university. But I wonder, out of that school—I think there are about 800 students there and about half the school is involved in the environmental club—how many of them will get a chance to go to university. That is a public school in a working class area. If you know Keele and Lawrence, it's not that well-to-do. If there is that kind of commitment by these students and their teachers, we in government owe it to them to give them every opportunity, to make sure that kind of initiative is encouraged as much as possible. This is entrepreneurship initiative of the first order.

That's why, when we look at how we fund universities and the post-secondary section, we do whatever we can to remove obstacles and barriers.

I think Bill 19 is a step toward streamlining the ability of these students to tap into the OSAP loans. We've got to make it easier; we've got to have much more opportunity and do whatever we can to keep tuition down, as difficult as it is, because no matter how you cut it, if tuitions keep going up the way they are, there are going to be a lot of students who, through no fault of their own—not because they're not intelligent and not because they're not willing or their families aren't willing—will not be able to excel in university or college.

That is why we have to look at Bill 19 and whatever we do in this sector as an investment in Ontario's future. It's an investment in intelligence. That's really where we can be competitive with the rest of the world. We can invest in human intelligence here in this province. There's a lot of it. I encourage this government to do whatever it can to ensure that there is a stoppage to this creeping increase in the cost of tuition, that there's more facilitation of scholarship grants, way above and beyond what we do now, so that every child will get that chance to fulfil himself.

Thank you for listening. I appreciate it.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Questions and comments?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** I'm largely in agreement with the member from Eglinton-Lawrence. In looking at the bill itself, he describes it as perhaps a good step. I see it more as an administrative bill. It is about streamlining. It really parallels the federal government's move to take over student loans because of the high debt load that was there and because banks were no longer prepared to finance the risk in that sector. So there are some administrative changes here.

What I think is sad is that we've missed an opportunity to really try to tackle the root cause of the problems in our universities, colleges and post-secondary education system right now for student indebtedness, and that is the issue of tuition.

I think the member from Eglinton-Lawrence's analysis is right. I'd give it some language that he may not use. He provided a class analysis and I think, quite frankly, that is appropriate. When we see what has happened over the last number of years, since 1995, across the board tuitions have gone up by about 60%. Some professional courses that have been deregulated have gone up by as much as 500%. As much as the government speaks to the issue of the student loan program and the changes they've made, what we can see in hard research that's done is that working class families are making different choices. Kids from working class families are saying they don't want to take the risk of that kind of high indebtedness. There is a chilling effect that is happening which is so terrible for the future of our young people and for the future of our country.

1750

I believe, and our caucus believes, that we've got to reverse this. We should immediately re-regulate those professional courses that have been deregulated. We

should roll back those tuitions. Let's have an even playing ground for anyone who wants to be a doctor, for example, in this province. We also believe we need to roll back tuition increases another 10%. Let's then look at how we can alleviate the pressure and really have equal opportunity of access. It's a class analysis, I think.

**Mr O'Toole:** I just want to pick up on the positive responses I'm hearing. I would include in that the member for Beaches-East York, who, to some extent, has gone a long way to agreeing that the harmonization initiative to provide students with a clear opportunity is really the right thing to do. Beyond that, there may be some disagreements with the deregulation of tuition.

I think the member from Eglinton-Lawrence said it, and I think he recognizes, as well as relating to KPIs, the key performance indicators, it's the right thing to do. We should measure somehow, so that students have choices to make. We've all talked about choices. Which program leads to the best opportunities?

I think the institutions are starting to change their culture as well. In fact, they've been consulted, as you know, on developing these performance measures. But it still does come down to choice. At the end of the day, it comes down to choices.

I like to think of the positive part of it. We have much harmony on some of the comments made today, and really it's a celebration for students. If we could simplify the process of applying and what the criteria for applying are—there are going to be variances between provinces for opportunities, and some of the best universities and colleges in Ontario. We have to make sure we have some of the best programs. I think that between students having those choices, it's clear to me that this is what this accountability mechanism is all about. There will be those who disagree with the word "accountability," but students need to know what the success rates have been, what the enrolment has been, what the graduation rate has been. I think this gives them the information to make clear choices. After all, at the end of the day, all their education and training is about how they want to direct their own lives in the future. So it's not just that.

The member for Hamilton Mountain, who I know was a professor and is a learned person—although she is not here right now. I shouldn't say that but I say it because she said to me—I know she's watching on television somewhere out there. I hope she doesn't have a television in her car. But anyway—

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to my colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence, who indicated clearly that we will be supporting this bill. It does provide, in our view, certain streamlining to make it easier for student loans and so on. But he also correctly noted, and I think with some eloquence, based on his experience in his riding—the experience many of us in this House have had—that the question of post-secondary funding, the question of tuition, ought to be looked at in much greater detail.

Post-secondary education in this province is becoming more and more difficult for working families to achieve, whether you're talking about medical school or undergraduate programs. Tuition increases in the course of the last 10 years, I believe, now exceed 110%, well above the rate of inflation in other sectors.

It's interesting that this government's policy has been effectively, in our view, to starve post-secondary education at the very time when world experts in productivity and other things are telling us the importance and significance of post-secondary education to productivity improvements.

Robert Reich spoke at a conference we organized, and basically talked about governments having two roads: they can take the high road or the low road. If you take the low road—that is, lower taxes, lower quality, a lower standard of living—someone is always going to be lower than you. Or you can take the high road: higher productivity, a higher standard of living, better health care, better education.

Post-secondary education is essential to our future productivity. It's essential that our young people have access and opportunity in post-secondary education. Working families are calling on us to deliver that. This government has failed that. This government has failed miserably in the whole area of post-secondary education. This bill, while it's acceptable, doesn't go far enough. We'll change those things in about two and a half years.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I'm glad to jump in on this. It's kind of interesting; I've sat in this House for the last few days and heard eight questions from the opposition Liberals about the fees, the cost of going to medical school. In not one of those eight questions did we hear from them what their position was. What's your position? They give us all this code language about working people and about the cost. Of course there's a cost. When you go to medical school, you're probably going to have to incur some debt. I appreciate the fact that that happens and it's difficult but, you know, I'm not so sure, after you graduate, if there's a much better position or capacity for anyone to move into a very significantly well-paying job, respected, and get a guaranteed card from the government to begin billing in order to make a significant amount of money. I'm not suggesting they're not important; of course they're important.

I guess you're saying they should incur no debt. Is that what you're saying? The government should pay every last nickel that it costs to educate someone through medical school? Is that what you're saying? You're saying there shouldn't be any fee attached at all. There should be nothing to encumber the individual to pay anything toward their education, although at the end of the education we can't compel these people to stay in Ontario and work. We can't compel them to work in certain parts of this province. We can't do any of that, but they're going to stand and ask us questions: how come someone has to go into debt after they go to medical school?



I ask the members opposite, you had eight questions, three questions from your leader—I know where the NDP are—three from your deputy leader and two from a backbencher. Not once did you say what's your position. So I ask the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, or that member from Hamilton who has a position on virtually everything, both sides, like ordering teachers back to work, what's your position on the cost of medical school?

**The Speaker:** The member for Eglinton-Lawrence.

**Mr Colle:** I want to say thanks to the member for Beaches-East York for her comments, insightful as always; the member for Durham about accountability, I appreciate that; and my colleague from Windsor-St Clair for his input.

The Minister of Labour basically got down to base ranting and raving as usual. Up until this point we had, I think, a very harmonious, productive debate. It's too bad, when we're dealing with an issue of this importance, which I think is in many ways non-partisan, because we're looking to the future of our students. We want to try to make sure we're doing the right things, because a lot is at stake here.

Not all Tories but certain Tories have a problem: they never listen. We said emphatically that we would roll back tuition 10% and we would re-regulate post-secondary tuition, especially for medical students. Those are two things we stood for firmly. But what I want to get back to—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Colle:** The Minister of Labour keeps ranting and raving as usual. The key thing is it's not a matter of—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Colle:** The Minister of Correctional Services thinks it's a joke; the Minister of Correctional Services thinks it's funny. But what isn't funny to families in Ontario is that their children deserve a right to education. These two ministers think the right to education is a joke. We on this side think it's a very serious mandate that the provincial government has. That's why we, as Liberals, feel that education is not a cost; it's an investment in the intelligence and the future of this province. We don't think it's a joke, as the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Correctional Services think it is.

**The Speaker:** It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

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## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 3 mai 2001

### AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

<b>Loi de 2001 sur la sécurité des cavaliers, Projet de loi 12, <i>M<sup>me</sup> Molinari</i></b>	
Adoptée .....	417
<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil exécutif, projet de loi 21, <i>M. Smitherman</i></b>	
M. Bisson.....	411
Rejetée .....	418

### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2001 sur les stimulants au logement à prix abordable, projet de loi 37, <i>M. Caplan</i></b>	
Adoptée .....	420
<b>Loi de 2001 sur le gel des loyers, projet de loi 38, <i>M. Marchese</i></b>	
Adoptée .....	421
<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi (augmentation du salaire minimum), projet de loi 39, <i>M. Hampton</i></b>	
Adoptée .....	421

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'harmonisation des prêts d'études de l'Ontario, projet de loi 19, <i>M<sup>me</sup> Cunningham</i></b>	
Débat présumé ajourné .....	459

# CONTENTS

Thursday 3 May 2001

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001,

Bill 12, <i>Mrs Molinari</i>	
Mrs Molinari .....	399, 405
Mr Bradley .....	400
Mr Tascona .....	402
Mr Bartolucci .....	402
Mr Dunlop .....	403
Mr Bisson .....	403
Agreed to .....	417

### Executive Council Amendment Act,

2001, Bill 21, <i>Mr Smitherman</i>	
Mr Smitherman .....	406, 407, 408, 417
Mr Tilson .....	406, 416
Mr Bisson .....	407, 411
Mr Stockwell .....	407, 410
Mr Bartolucci .....	408
The Acting Speaker .....	408
Ms Mushinski .....	409, 410, 411
Mr Peters .....	410
Mr Tascona .....	414
Mrs Dombrowsky .....	414
Mr Wettlaufer .....	415
Mr Bradley .....	416
Negated .....	418

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Fire in Toronto

Mr Colle .....	418
----------------	-----

### Road safety

Mr Dunlop .....	418
-----------------	-----

### Anniversary of Polish Constitution

Mr Kennedy .....	418
------------------	-----

### Fishermen's memorial

Mr Barrett .....	419
------------------	-----

### Arts and cultural funding

Ms Di Cocco .....	419
-------------------	-----

### Labour dispute

Mr Kormos .....	419
-----------------	-----

### Brick Street School

Mr Wood .....	419
---------------	-----

### Municipal restructuring

Mr Smitherman .....	420
---------------------	-----

### Events in York region

Mrs Munro .....	420
-----------------	-----

## FIRST READINGS

### Affordable Housing Incentives

Act, 2001, Bill 37, <i>Mr Caplan</i>	
Agreed to .....	420
Mr Caplan .....	420

### Rent Freeze Act, 2001,

Bill 38, <i>Mr Marchese</i>	
Agreed to .....	421
Mr Marchese .....	421

## Employment Standards

### Amendment Act (Raising the Minimum Wage), 2001,

Bill 39, <i>Mr Hampton</i>	
Agreed to .....	421
Mr Hampton .....	421

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### Welfare reform

Mr Baird .....	421, 426
Mr Gravelle .....	427
Ms Martel .....	428

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Tuition fees

Mrs Papatello .....	422
Mr Clement .....	422
Mrs Bountrogianni .....	429
Mrs Cunningham .....	429

### Municipal restructuring

Mr Smitherman .....	423
Mr Flaherty .....	423

### Air quality

Mr Hampton .....	424
Mrs Witmer .....	424, 436
Ms Churley .....	425
Mr Wilson .....	425
Mr Bradley .....	435

### Competitive electricity market

Mr Hampton .....	425
Mr Wilson .....	425

### Labour agency reform

Mr Miller .....	430
Mr Stockwell .....	430

### Mandatory drug testing

Mr Gravelle .....	430
Mr Baird .....	430, 435
Ms Martel .....	435
Mr Kormos .....	435

### Pharmacare

Mr Arnott .....	431
Mr Clement .....	431

### Minimum wage

Mr Hampton .....	432
Mr Stockwell .....	432

### Environmental protection

Mrs Dombrowsky .....	433
Mr Coburn .....	433
Mr Peters .....	433

### Welfare reform

Mr Wettlaufer .....	433
Mr Baird .....	434

### Economic policy

Mr Kwinter .....	434
Mr Flaherty .....	434

## Rural jobs strategy

Mr Johnson .....	435
Mr Coburn .....	435

## PETITIONS

### Education legislation

Mrs McLeod .....	436
------------------	-----

### Environmental protection

Ms Churley .....	436
------------------	-----

### Highway safety

Mr O'Toole .....	436
------------------	-----

### Ontarians with disabilities legislation

Mr Peters .....	437
-----------------	-----

### Affordable housing

Mr Marchese .....	437
-------------------	-----

### Karla Homolka

Mr Hastings .....	437
-------------------	-----

### Sale of schools

Mr Curling .....	437
------------------	-----

### Protection of minors

Mr Wood .....	438
Mr Gill .....	439

### Special education

Mrs Dombrowsky .....	438
----------------------	-----

### Diabetes treatment

Ms Mushinski .....	438
--------------------	-----

### Air quality

Mr Bradley .....	438
------------------	-----

## SECOND READINGS

### Ontario Student Loan Harmonization

Act, 2001, Bill 19, <i>Mrs Cunningham</i>	
Mr Gill .....	439, 449
Mr O'Toole .....	441, 458
Mr Dunlop .....	446
Mr Curling .....	447, 452
Mr Kormos .....	448
Mr Hastings .....	448
Mrs Bountrogianni .....	448, 449
Mr Colle .....	455, 459
Ms Lankin .....	457
Mr Duncan .....	458
Mr Stockwell .....	458
Debate deemed adjourned .....	459

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Legislative pages

The Speaker .....	422
-------------------	-----

### Business of the House

Mrs Ecker .....	436
-----------------	-----

Continued overleaf



ALLEN  
1  
023



N° 11

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of Ontario**

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**Assemblée législative  
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Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 7 May 2001**

**Lundi 7 mai 2001**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### WEARING OF PINS

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: A project has been developed in Brant, through Rhonda Hertel of the Brantford Nova Vita, to raise the profile of our fight against domestic violence. This project been affirmed by all of the province of Ontario. I seek unanimous consent to wear the daisy pin for the month of May.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

I thank the member.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** It will come as no surprise to members of this Legislature that there is a very serious difficulty—in fact, it's a crisis—facing many communities, large and small, across Ontario in terms of getting and keeping family practitioners. At last report, I am told there are over 100 communities in southern and northern Ontario that do not have an adequate number of primary care or family physicians.

I want to draw to the attention of this Legislature today a wonderful part of my constituency, the Bromley-Whitewater, Cobden-Beachburg area of central Renfrew county, where we have today over 8,000 people, many of them older, all of them without the benefit of public transport, and none of these people has in their community—and the community might be Beachburg, it might be Cobden, it might be Foresters Falls, it might be La Passe, it could be Douglas—a resident full-time family practitioner. In fact, we have two physicians coming in from Shawville, Quebec, to meet the community needs.

There is a wonderful group of people, the Whitewater-Bromley Community Health Centre group—ably led by people like Dave Shields, Liz Cobb, Bonny Johnson and Dave Stewart, to name but four—who have been working very diligently and creatively to draw to the government of Ontario's attention the urgent and pressing need to respond with funding for a community health centre to that part of the Upper Ottawa Valley.

I am here today to support their request and to underline the urgency of this matter affecting so many of my constituents.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I would like to introduce Mr Mike Murphy, vice-president of Management and Training Corp, the company which has been selected to partner with the government on the operation of the Central North Correctional Centre at Penetanguishene in my riding of Simcoe North. Mr Murphy is in the audience.

Management and Training Corp operates 13 correctional facilities and 23 Job Corp Centres in the United States, Australia and the Marshall Islands. MTC has a long history in training and rehabilitation, which they have put to excellent use in their correctional facilities. They offer extensive personnel development programs in areas like substance abuse, life skills, anger management and crisis intervention, to name a few.

Public safety is at the forefront of our government's work to transform the Ontario correctional system. This new facility is the cutting-edge example of this. All inmate-occupied areas are surrounded by a 16-foot fence topped with razor ribbon. All doors, windows, locks and perimeter walls are built to maximum security standards. The most advanced security technology is used throughout this facility, which is built in a pod design so that inmate movement is limited and safety is achieved for both correctional staff and the public. These security features and the reputation of Management and Training Corp will make this facility a success.

The government continues to be committed to ensuring that the tough performance standards we have established for Ontario's correctional facilities are met regardless of who is operating these facilities. It is important, therefore, to stress the word "partner" in this announcement, since our government will continue to play a strong role in running and monitoring this ultra-modern, ultra-safe facility. We believe that MTC will meet our tough standards and at the same time help us fulfill our commitment to the people of Ontario.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** One of the truly alarming realities of the past 10 years has been government's continuing decline in

support for Ontario's community colleges. The sad fact is that while enrolment has increased by 35% over that time period, the per student funding provided by the province has actually decreased by 40%, leaving Ontario's college students the most poorly funded in the country.

This is particularly frustrating for Confederation College in Thunder Bay. While the college has been a remarkable success story, graduating 20,000 students over the past 30 years, the vast majority hailing from northwestern Ontario, the college is now facing critical decisions in order to balance its budget. Unless improved funding is forthcoming in this week's budget—funding that recognizes the \$1.7-million shortfall between basic needs and the presently anticipated funding—the college may be forced to eliminate their deficit by cancelling programs, raising tuition fees and eliminating several key staff positions.

Any or all of these options can be avoided if the province recognizes the dreadful impact their yearly cuts in funding have had on this vital educational institution, cuts that have totalled over \$17 million since 1994, resulting in a 40% loss of full-time staff.

Today I'm calling on the Minister of Finance to acknowledge the need for improved funding for Confederation College in Wednesday's provincial budget. I trust, Minister, that you recognize that Confederation College is one of the key contributors to the sustainability and growth of the region. But in order for it to continue to grow, the province must not allow it to fall further behind. We hope, Minister, that you'll recognize that need on Wednesday.

#### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Today marks the start of Education Week in Ontario, an annual celebration that gives schools across our province the opportunity to showcase their students' talents and recognize the past year's achievements.

This year's Education Week theme is "Excellence in school performance, excellence in student learning." It's a theme that encapsulates our government's commitment to education reform. This government knows that our public education system has much to be proud of. Excellent and committed teachers, staff, parents and volunteers directly contribute to the quality of education in our schools across Ontario, like the new school located in my riding, Durham: St John Bosco Catholic school in Oshawa.

In today's world, education is the key to success. It gives young people the knowledge and skills needed to compete in the global economy. Education helps them become responsible and active citizens. It's one of the keys to Ontario's prosperity.

Just two weeks ago, students from John M. James public school in Bowmanville participated in a nationwide event called Canadian National Marsville Link-up Day. This Internet event was designed to teach students how to apply their knowledge, imagination, communi-

cation and technical skills with others across Ontario and indeed Canada.

Our student-focused education funding, the curriculum, student assessment and safe schools will help to ensure that we achieve excellence in school performance and student learning. Today, at the start of Education Week, my colleagues and I pledge our continuing commitment to ensuring that our students get the best possible education. I would like to thank our teachers, parents and students for their committed search for excellence.

#### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I'd like to provide the Minister of Health a reality check regarding the nursing situation reflected in my riding and across this province. I received this handwritten letter from a registered nurse who works in the emergency ward at the Sarnia General Hospital. This letter describes a situation that has been compounded by the Harris government policies on hospital restructuring. She writes:

"Help! My ship is sinking and I need a life preserver. I work as a registered nurse in the emergency department at the Sarnia General Hospital.

"The lack of beds for our admitted patients is exhausting our own department's resources. Staff are working extra long hours and extra shifts to care for the overflow.

"Not only is patient care and safety suffering, but also the nurses can't keep treading water. They're all too tired.

"I have never been this dissatisfied in my nursing career. In 1995 I was laid off due to bed closures. With my American licence I worked for a short time in the US. My philosophy is that, if you're not happy, do something to change it. Does this mean that I have to leave work in Ontario again? I hope not. Hopefully this letter will help bring about improvements. I'd like to stay put in Ontario, but I'm ready to go. Thank you."

Yet another nurse leaves Ontario.

1340

#### LABOUR POLICY

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** The real games being played at Casino Niagara are the games being played by this government in its attack on the security guards at Casino Niagara, who in February of the year 2000 organized themselves into a collective bargaining unit of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union.

This government, with its condemnatory philosophy of workers and their trade unions, has blocked that trade union's effort to represent those workers and has effectively barred those workers from engaging in any collective bargaining by using the Alcohol and Gaming Commission as a bar to them being certified as a union and to having bargaining rights with the management there.

We're talking about in excess of a year now that this government has been playing games with these



workers—this government, Mike Harris and the Tories, demonstrating that they don't like working people to begin with, that they like low-income working people even less, and that they, the Tories of Ontario, despise trade unions and their efforts to give working people like the security guards at Casino Niagara a modest right and a modest level of control over their workplace so that their lives can be safer, their jobs can be more secure, and they can be healthier, contributing members of the workplace and the community.

This government has been less than candid, less than straightforward to these workers and to the community. It's about time they understood that there's going to be a huge price to pay.

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** This is the first day of Emergency Preparedness Week in Ontario. From May 7 to 13, communities throughout Ontario will participate in activities to increase awareness of emergency preparedness. Emergency Measures Ontario coordinates activities on behalf of the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

This year's theme is "Reducing the risk—toward safer communities in the 21st century." It means that everyone—government, industry and individuals—can contribute to community emergency preparedness and help increase public safety.

Six Ontario communities, including my home town of London, Barrie, Cornwall, Hamilton, Port Hope and Thunder Bay, have earned special distinction from the province under the government's partnerships toward safer communities program.

Emergency Measures Ontario and the office of the Ontario fire marshal launched this program last year to improve public safety in Ontario. The program is designed to encourage communities and industries to develop a plan to prevent and deal with emergency situations involving hazardous materials. No community is immune from disaster. Recent evacuations in Toronto and Ottawa have brought this message home. Everyone has an important role to play in keeping our communities safe.

I invite all members of this House to join me in recognizing the vital contributions that our emergency service providers make in our province.

### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** Almost two years ago, with people in 102 communities across the province unable to get a family doctor, the Harris government sent out a fact finder to see if there was a doctor shortage. Dr McKendry said we needed at least 1,000 doctors. Almost a year and a half ago, with people in 109 communities now unable to get a family doctor, the government set up an expert panel to look at how to deal with the doctor shortage.

The government has still not released the report of its experts, but late last month the minister at least acknowledged there is a problem. The minister said his government was committed to the development of a new medical school in the north, but he gave no timelines, no money and no indication of whether there would be any first-year medical school spaces.

The minister also announced that his government would streamline the process for accepting foreign-trained physicians. The question is, when? The College of Physicians and Surgeons gave government a plan for speeding up the licensing of foreign-trained doctors almost a year ago. All it needed was some funding for a training and assessment program. We could have had new doctors fully licensed and out in communities practising medicine six months ago if the government had acted last July. So what's the delay now? Why no details, why no dollars, why no timeline for getting started and why still no indication that this government is ready to fund new medical school spaces?

The Harris government needs to understand the absolutely urgent need for action. We have already had more than two solid years of delay while the problem of doctor shortages reaches truly critical proportions. The expert panel report must be released today. The government must announce that the College of Physicians and Surgeons' proposal for licensing foreign-trained physicians will be put in place immediately and the government must tell us this week how many new medical school spaces will be up and ready for this September and where the new spaces will be. There is no time and no excuse for any further delay.

### ACADEMIC TESTING

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** Once again I would like to recognize the students, parents and educators of Waterloo-Wellington for their achievements with Ontario's literacy tests for grade 10 students. Each of the school boards that I'm privileged to represent has provided me with information outlining successes and plans to continue to improve student and school achievement.

The Waterloo public school board exceeded provincial averages with notably high results at Elmira District Secondary School and Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School in Wilmot township. Students at these schools were among the region's top achievers.

The Waterloo Catholic school board has captured the spirit of ongoing improvement and is undergoing a thorough analysis of how students approach the test and how to improve the process, along with parents and teachers, so that students have the skills they need to function effectively in a more complex working environment.

The Upper Grand school board has advised me that 75% of their secondary schools surpassed the provincial average. They are committed to ongoing improvement in all schools, and for students who may be unsuccessful on the test, they are putting in place remedial efforts to see

that those who must retake it can do so with confidence and skill.

Our Wellington Catholic school board also achieved well above the provincial average. I would like to quote the board's director of education, Don Drone, who said, "These tests have helped us improve student achievement. Each year, our grade 3 and 6 students show improvement on their tests. This is the first time for this test. We expect to see improvement in future years."

On that very positive note, I commend the trustees, board officials, teachers, students and parents for putting quality first and putting students first.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we continue, we have in the east public gallery Ed Philip, the former member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, who was a member of the 32nd, 33rd, 34th and 35th Parliaments. Would all members please welcome our colleague.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY AND SUPPORT ARREARS ENFORCEMENT AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES OBLIGATIONS FAMILIALES ET L'EXÉCUTION DES ARRIÉRÉS D'ALIMENTS

Mr Wettlaufer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 40, An Act to amend the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les obligations familiales et l'exécution des arriérés d'aliments.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** Recently, a Divisional Court ruled that the Family Responsibility Office does not have the authority to collect support payments arrears accumulated when families are opting out of using the FRO. While this was created by a loophole in the existing legislation, I feel that the decision is wrong for those recipients. I firmly believe that when an individual fails to live up to a support agreement, the children of this province and their families should not be made to suffer. That is why my bill would specifically make all support payments arrears from the opt-out period enforceable by the Family Responsibility Office.

I trust that all members of this House will join me in doing the right thing and help children and families receive every penny they are entitled to.

1350

##### DAY NURSERIES AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES GARDERIES

Mr Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 41, An Act to amend the Day Nurseries Act to allow up to seven children to be cared for in rural areas without requiring a licence under the Act / Projet de loi 41, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les garderies afin d'autoriser, dans les régions rurales, la garde de sept enfants au plus sans devoir obtenir un permis prévu par la Loi.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** The purpose of the bill is to exempt day nurseries and private home daycare agencies that provide care for no more than seven children from the licence requirements of the act if the nurseries or agencies are located in a rural area or in towns and villages with a population of fewer than 3,500.

##### OAK RIDGES MORaine CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND PROMOTION ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA PRÉSERVATION, LA PROTECTION ET LA PROMOTION DE LA MORaine D'OAK RIDGES

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 42, An Act to conserve and protect the Oak Ridges Moraine by stopping urban sprawl and uncontrolled development and promoting recreational, commercial and agricultural activities that are environmentally sustainable / Projet de loi 42, Loi visant à préserver et à protéger la moraine d'Oak Ridges en mettant fin au mitage et à l'aménagement désordonné et en favorisant des activités récréatives, commerciales et agricoles soucieuses de l'environnement.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** As you know, the Oak Ridges moraine is a jewel that stretches from King City to Cobourg. This bill asks for an immediate freeze on development on the moraine until a provincial conservation and protection plan is enacted, based on the 1994 guideline. It also asks that the provincial government promote and encourage local recreational, commercial and agricultural activities that are ecologically sustainable and compatible with the moraine.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Mr Speaker, I'd ask for unanimous consent to move this bill forward to pass second reading. I'd ask for unanimous consent so that this bill and my bill, Bill 29, can pass



second reading so that they can go into hearings right away, since both these bills have been before us before.

**The Speaker:** The member has asked for unanimous consent for the bills to proceed to second reading. Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was given a copy of a statement that was to be delivered by the Minister of Northern Development and Mines with respect to promoting growth among all regions and industries in Ontario's far north. It goes on to outline some alleged initiatives. Now I've been asked to give this statement back, and I'm told there is going to be another statement. I've now been handed another one. Is the minister going to be doing a statement today on this and, if so, which statement reflects government policy?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** It's my understanding, in the interests of keeping all members of this House up to date, that the minister did want to make a last-minute change in the statement. So there will be a statement going forward today and I think if you listen to the minister it will be very clear what the clarification is.

**Mr Duncan:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: It must be an oversight on the government's part, but earlier today the Minister of Education made a major retreat on their education policy and we thought the minister would want to do a statement about that in the House. I seek unanimous consent to ask the Minister of Education to address the government's retreat on education funding.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I heard a no.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** This government recognizes that Ontario's rural communities and the northern and eastern regions of this province still do not share equally in the benefits of our strong economy. We are committed to restoring this balance so that no matter where you live in this great province, opportunity is accessible.

We have been working toward that goal since 1995, when the Mike Harris government was first elected to office, and we have accomplished a great deal in that time. We have introduced a series of initiatives that encourage the creation of partnerships across sectors, across communities, across regions; partnerships that encourage individuals, businesses, organizations, associations and communities to invest in their own futures.

Programs such as Grow Ontario, the rural job strategy, the rural youth job strategy and, most recently, healthy futures for Ontario agriculture have shown just how effective this approach can be.

Since 1995, approximately one quarter of a billion dollars—\$250 million—has been invested in growing the economy of rural Ontario. Well over 20,000 new jobs and opportunities have been created outside our cities and urban centres, and there is still much more to do.

That is why I'm announcing today the details of our government's plan to promote economic growth among all regions and all industries, one of the 21 steps that the government of Ontario proposes to take to meet the challenges and make the most of the opportunities that await us in the 21st century.

To build on regional economic strengths and to help communities reach their economic potential, the government will introduce pilot regional economic development resource jump teams. These teams will help communities take advantage of emerging opportunities and strengthen their local economies.

Our government will study the Quinte Business Development Centre as a province-wide model for regional centres that can improve access to business and economic advisory services in rural Ontario. Our government will work with Ontario's farmers and agri-businesses to develop a made-in-Ontario solution to the challenge of maintaining our agricultural competitiveness in the global marketplace.

We are acting on the report of the Task Force on Rural Economic Development—led so ably, I might add, by my parliamentary assistant, Dr Doug Galt—to ensure that all parts of Ontario, including our rural communities, the northern and eastern regions of this province, share equally in the benefits of a strong economy.

We are also acting to make certain that our farmers and agri-businesses not just maintain but in fact strengthen their competitive position in the global marketplace. We'll do that by working with our agri-food industry to develop and implement a made-in-Ontario approach to address the vagaries of the marketplace and the whims of Mother Nature. Farmers who enjoy some measure of income stability can afford to look for new opportunities, can afford to look to the long term.

Both our farmers and our food processors have told us through our consultations that they understand the benefits to be realized by modernizing Ontario's food safety laws. Not only will consumer confidence be enhanced, so too will their competitive position in the global marketplace. They are ready to work with us to take the steps that will safeguard Ontario's share of that global market by making sure Ontario's food products are of an even higher quality and come with even greater assurances of their safety.

Our government will introduce legislation that will allow for the modernization of Ontario's food safety laws and regulations in order to continue to protect consumers while ensuring access to markets.

1400

It is a broad-reaching and ambitious plan, and will require a multi-jurisdictional approach if it is to be truly successful. That is why my efforts will be supported by those of my colleagues the Ministers of Tourism, of

Energy, Science and Technology, and of Northern Development and Mines. I look forward to working with them and with all of our stakeholders to meet the challenges and make the most of the opportunities that this 21st century will present to us.

### TOURISM AND TRADE

**Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation):** Formalizing the links between tourism, culture and recreation opens up a world of possibilities to keep Ontario competitive, to encourage more partnerships between public and private industries, and to enhance economic development and job creation.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation has taken aggressive action on multiple fronts to establish Ontario as a world-class, four-season tourism destination. Just as the government of Ontario promotes Ontario internationally as a great place to visit and do business, we also promote a strong quality of life for all Ontarians through recreation and cultural opportunities.

I am pleased to be part of a government that is ceaseless in its efforts to expand opportunities for trade across this province. That is why I am grateful for the efforts of my colleague the Minister of Consumer and Business Services and his predecessor, now the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, for their efforts in securing access to the European market for Ontario icewines. Congratulations to those two gentlemen.

These efforts were rewarded recently with a tremendous breakthrough: the lifting of trade barriers that for years have prevented Ontario producers from sharing their award-winning icewines with a key international market. I am pleased to announce today that the government will build on the achievement of access into the European market for Ontario icewines by pursuing a broadening of that access provision to include the province's other award-winning wines.

As our efforts to increase awareness of our quality wines grow, so too will our efforts to capitalize on the tourism opportunities that will result from increased awareness of all that Ontario has to offer, especially in the area of agri-tourism. That is why I am pleased to announce today that the government will investigate options for preserving tender fruit land and promoting agri-tourism.

The sustainability of tender fruit lands and agriculture is key to the development of Ontario's wine, culinary, and agri-tourism industry. As a result, my ministry, working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and others, will be developing a plan to ensure tourism development is compatible with agricultural land preservation.

We want to duplicate Ontario's excellence in agri-tourism on the fields of international competition and community recreation. That's why I'm pleased to announce that in preparation for our bid to host the Olympics in 2008, and to better compete in international games, the government will conduct a review of amateur

sport policy, led by my parliamentary assistant, Frank Mazzilli, the MPP for London-Fanshawe.

Sport and recreation touch lives across our province, from the local arena and recreation programs through to the high-performance athlete dreaming of Olympic glory. Among other objectives, our government will examine ways in which we can encourage more private sector partners to join us in support of community recreation and athletic excellence, and develop strategies to promote sport tourism through the hosting of high-profile amateur and professional events.

Our government is also working to promote excellence and job creation in our cultural media industry, an industry that already employs 60,000 Ontarians every year. That is why the government will set clear goals for cultural industries through the Ontario Media Development Corp in order to enhance, for example, Ontario's attraction as a preferred location for film and television production. New partners in the book and magazine publishing, sound recording and digital media sectors will join film and television to prepare for the era of convergence as the lines between these industries are gradually broken down by new technology and new opportunities.

Finally, the merger of tourism, culture and recreation presents an excellent opportunity to drive our 23 ministerial agencies to maximize their contributions to Ontario's economy. That's why the government will mandate its operating agencies to promote business growth, leverage private investment and enhance job creation.

In closing, I look forward to working with my colleagues to promote growth, investment and job creation across this great province.

### NORTHERN ECONOMY

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I was delighted when I listened to the recent speech from the throne. In step 7 of its plan, this government clearly enunciates its goal to see economic growth in all regions of the province. At the same time, this government recognizes that some regions have not shared equally in recent growth and prosperity. We know that northern communities face unique challenges. Severe weather conditions, long distances and sparse population can make doing business in the north a challenge. This is particularly true in Ontario's far north.

The far north covers the northern 40% of the province of Ontario. It is the ancestral home of 30 First Nation communities. It represents a storehouse of untapped economic potential, with opportunities in mining, forest products, tourism and energy development. The people of this vast land must share in the prosperity that will be the legacy of this government.

But in order for this to happen, there are many challenges to overcome. First nation communities, which make up most of the 13,000 residents of the region, increasingly see the economic potential from developing far-north resources in an environmentally sound, sustainable manner. The people of the far north want the chance



to build healthy, prosperous lives for their children and grandchildren. More and more they seek fruitful partnerships with private industry and the provincial government as well as the federal government. At the same time, they are concerned that development occurs responsibly and in a manner that is sensitive to environmental, cultural and heritage values. The Ontario government understands and supports these aspirations.

That is why I am announcing today that by moving to open up the far north to mining and resource activities, the government will create more opportunities for the residents and help aboriginal communities become more self-reliant. We are working hard to create an environment in which economic activity can flourish by continuing to enhance transportation, telecommunications, health care and community development.

We have worked with remote First Nations communities to bring electrical power to their homes, meeting places and businesses and to upgrade plumbing. We have helped communities to mitigate the higher cost and challenges of distance by investing each year in a network of winter roads. We have introduced major initiatives that will open doors for new employment and economic activity by strengthening our forest products industry and creating exciting opportunities in tourism. At the same time, we have moved decisively to make Ontario one of the best places in the world for mineral sector investment.

While these are significant achievements, we note that there is still much more to do and we are committed to working with First Nations to build strong, healthy, self-reliant communities across Ontario's far north. Over the next weeks and months we will bring you further details on this initiative.

I look forward to working with the communities of Ontario's far north to make these dreams a reality.

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** In October 1997, our government established the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology, with a mandate to make Ontario one of the leading jurisdictions in the world for research and innovation.

I report today that the ministry is well on its way to fulfilling this mandate and intends to make Ontario the best North American jurisdiction for research, development and innovation and for the jobs and prosperity they bring. In this regard, the ministry is currently looking at a series of performance indicators to better measure our success in achieving this goal.

Innovation is not new to Ontarians, as our history and past economic accomplishments have shown. Innovation is defined as our ability to use science and technology to find new solutions and generate new business opportunities. Innovation is fast becoming a do-or-die component of economic success.

The pace of economic change today means that we can no longer rest on our past accomplishments, other-

wise we will be overtaken by our global competitors. The ability to develop and commercialize new technologies, products and services and bring them to market right here in Ontario is the key to maintaining and strengthening Ontario's competitive position in the new economy.

To encourage and support science, technology and innovation, our government has taken an approach that avoids picking winners and losers. Instead, our approach has been to concentrate on creating the right climate to retain and attract business and investment, particularly in the knowledge-based or R&D-intensive new economy industries.

Last year's provincial budget yet again illustrated this government's continued commitment to building one of the most competitive jurisdictions for business, investment and job creation in North America. The corporate income tax cuts, the capital gains inclusion rate reduction, and the employer health tax exemption for eligible R&D-intensive companies—all announced in the 2000 Ontario budget—reflect the government's strong commitment to strengthening Ontario's competitive fundamentals for research and development and commercialization.

### 1410

We are clearly well on our way to building a high-value-added, innovation-based economy in Ontario. We all know that this is key to our future success and prosperity and to maintaining the high quality of life we have come to expect in this province. So I am proud to announce that the government will continue to foster new partnerships between business and research institutions to spur innovation through the commercialization of new ideas. The government has set the goal of making Ontario the third-largest home of the biotechnology industry in North America, and will work hard to achieve that.

In addition to the \$20 million our government has committed to creating biotechnology commercialization centres in Ottawa, London and Toronto, we have made significant investments in research through initiatives such as the \$550-million Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund, the \$750-million Ontario Innovation Trust and the \$85-million Premier's Research Excellence Awards.

Finally, I am proud to announce that the government supports and fully endorses the Canadian effort to have Ontario host the ITER international fusion energy project. The government is confident that, in competing against Japan and France, Canada can win this bid, which is awaiting formal submission by the federal government. Ontario long ago indicated a willingness to commit \$10 million per year for 30 years, each and every year, to this important scientific initiative, and we urge the federal government to commit to financial support for the project and to submit the bid. If Canada's bid succeeds, this research and development project would bring to Ontario 250 of the brightest minds in nuclear energy science, help diversify Ontario's high-tech industry, and inject billions of dollars into the provincial economy over 30 years.

I am pleased to reaffirm our government's commitment to consolidate Ontario's position as a global leader in research, development and innovation. The resulting jobs and prosperity will help fulfill our goal to make Ontario the best jurisdiction in North America in which to live, work, invest and raise a family.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Responses?

#### RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** Finally some recognition to the important industry of agriculture by this government, because it's certainly obvious that agriculture is something that has not been very high on the priority list of the Mike Harris government.

This government needs to recognize first and foremost that if you want to have a thriving agricultural industry and you want to see things happen in rural Ontario, you have to get behind and support that agricultural industry. That hasn't been happening.

It's positive, though, to see the made-in-Ontario initiatives that the minister is going through, because I think the minister and the government and eastern Ontario farmers have been looking across the border to Quebec and have seen the commitment that for over 25 years the Quebec government has made to agriculture. That commitment is in excess of \$300 million a year to safety nets alone, almost the entire OMAFRA budget in this province. I certainly hope there is going to be that financial support as we look for a made-in-Ontario solution to the safety net crises facing this province, that the minister has the dollars behind him if he's very serious.

The minister talked about working on a goal, but this government and Mike Harris promised in 1995 that there would be no cuts to agriculture. What we've seen is an over 40% cut in the agricultural budget. Where agriculture once was 1.2% of the provincial spending, it's now one half of 1%. There are rumours flying that we're going to see more cuts to agriculture in this budget. That's just not comprehensible and is no commitment to agriculture in this province.

They talk about food safety. It's very good, it's very important to have food safety, to ensure that the public has confidence in the food that we eat and consume, but it's no good if there's not going to be anyone there to enforce and inspect. We've seen cuts and cuts in the inspection end within food safety.

The animal health lab at the University of Guelph plays a vital role in ensuring the quality of the livestock herds of this province, but this is a government that forced the animal health lab to go out and do private fundraising. This is a government that forced the animal health lab to go out and purchase used equipment. That's no commitment.

It's interesting too to hear the Minister of Tourism talk about the tender fruit industry and Ontario wines. I hope that the Minister of Tourism works with the Minister of Agriculture and starts lobbying—and I'm certainly

prepared to work with you—the federal government to deal with the serious plum pox sharka virus issue that's facing the farmers in the Niagara Peninsula.

#### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My response is to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology to say that our future does depend on our ability to compete in terms of brainpower, and I would say that the government made a fundamental mistake in cutting support for our post-secondary education. It's now 15% lower than when Premier Harris became the Premier.

I think also that if we want to look at how we're going to compete long-term—we're now the most export-oriented jurisdiction in the world, but the government has chosen to compete on the basis of lower taxes. I gather the budget on Wednesday will commit Ontario to corporate income taxes 25% below neighbouring US states. In my opinion, the way we will win the long-term economic battle is not by attracting business to come here because we've got lower taxes—"Come here because we've got competitive taxes"—but "We are clearly the best jurisdiction where you're going to find the best possible workforce." That means an investment in science and technology in our post-secondary education, not competing on the basis of 25% lower corporate income taxes.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** It's perhaps breaking new ground when I hear a minister congratulate the federal government for the initiatives it has taken. Of course, I happen to agree with the minister today when he talks about the federal government's initiative on their bid for the Canadian effort on the international fusion energy project and fully endorses it. It's kind of nice to see somewhat of a change of heart, that in fact they're seeing the federal government do something to their liking.

When I look at the announcement—it's not really an announcement; I guess it is a statement. It starts off saying, "I'm proud to stand in the Legislature to let the people know the government will continue to foster new partnerships between business and research institutions." I don't know where the minister was about three weeks ago, when a number of groupings of high-tech firms in Ontario asked the federal government—have been pleading—to please provide some support for making sure our universities and colleges are strong in the area of technological development. We are not producing the students who are able to be hired by our companies, and they are needed. That's why companies have to go far afield. We could produce those, so money should be going into our colleges and universities to hire the professors to train our students so they can work here in Ontario and in Canada.

#### RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Today is an interesting day for certainly one reason. Over



a year ago the government commissioned its so-called task force on rural and northern development and now, a year later, they've produced a report which has nothing in it. In fact, I would be embarrassed to produce this report because it ignores many of the issues that are out there. We know this is a government that has a real problem in terms of farm runoff. If the government really wanted to address issues, it would be addressing that issue, but we know already that that is another issue this government is going to go out and study further; in other words, delay and do nothing.

Every day the Minister of Energy in this Legislature touts the California version of hydro deregulation and privatization, but one of the things the government doesn't want to acknowledge is the fact that people living in rural and northern Ontario in many cases are already seeing a degradation of their hydro service. As hydro companies ready themselves for privatization, there are fewer and fewer people out there looking after the lines, looking after the transmission and distribution system, and so more frequent brownouts and brownouts, which last longer, are actually already becoming a reality in much of rural and northern Ontario.

If those two issues had been addressed in this task force, those would have been two very important things that I think people would have been appreciative of hearing. The fact that they're not there tells us once again that this government doesn't have a strategy, and today's series of statements is simply another attempt to reannounce and reannounce something that still isn't happening.

I want to refer to the comments of the Minister of Tourism when he talks about tender fruit lands and says the government is going to study strategies to preserve tender fruit land. You're the government that did away with a strategy when you became government. There was a strategy in place. You did away with it and now the problem has become much worse. What's the government suggesting? Oh, they're now going to study the problem. You created the problem and you should be on your feet today admitting that.

1420

#### NORTHERN ECONOMY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Then we have the so-called Minister of Northern Development and Mines who gets up. Basically I have to say to him, your announcement today doesn't answer any of the questions that First Nations have put to this government. Over a year and a half ago, I read in this Legislature a letter from the Canadian president of De Beers, the diamond mining company, which gave very clear advice to your government. If you want to promote mining in First Nations territory, you must negotiate with First Nations a revenue-sharing strategy. Do we hear anything about a revenue-sharing strategy today? No. They gave you that advice a year and a half ago. De Beers wrote to the minister and the deputy minister and said, "If you want to promote mining in the First Nations territory in

the far north, you've got to be willing to talk about a revenue-sharing strategy." You're not there yet.

I outlined for the Legislature last week the fact there is a growing wood supply gap in northern Ontario. If the minister was really doing something, he would have been on his feet today explaining exactly what the strategy will be to negotiate with First Nations to access timber in the far north, what the revenue-sharing strategy will be, what the strategy will be for land use planning, for environmental protection, for training, for jobs, and what the strategy will be in terms of possible locations of sawmills etc, so that aboriginal people can take part in that economy. None of that was in today's statement, which tells us once again you don't have anything to announce. All of these issues that must be addressed, you don't have a strategy. You're simply trying to put forward another superficial announcement to cover over the fact that the real issues aren't being dealt with.

Finally, if the government really wants to address the issues across northern and rural Ontario, it has got to become much more specific in what it means in terms of a northern Ontario medical school and a rural medical school for southwestern Ontario. Simply announcing in the throne speech that you like the idea, without being able to tell people where the campuses will be, how many spaces will be available for medical students, how many will be reserved for students from the rural areas and how many will be reserved for students from northern areas doesn't put us any step further. Please, some details addressing these serious problems.

#### HOCKEY GAME

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We have with us today a typical Ontarian supporting the Toronto Maple Leafs, Doreen Ullman. As you know, the Toronto Maple Leafs are the last team left in Ontario and in Canada in their search for the coveted Stanley Cup. I move unanimous consent that we all give our support to Ontario's great team as they face the Devils tonight. Go, Leafs, go.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm sure all members will be watching intently, and since we won't be sitting this evening, I'm sure all TV sets will be tuned in to the game.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### TUITION FEES

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Colleges and Universities. Some very startling information was released today by Ipsos-Reid, and it really is a sad commentary on the state of affairs in Ontario when it comes to colleges and universities.

One of the most important dreams that sustains our working families is the thought that their children will be able to go on to college and university, assuming they've got the good marks and assuming that they're working hard. The Ipsos-Reid survey released today states that 70% of Ontario parents are concerned that their children may not be able to attend a public university, even if they're qualified, and the reason is simply because they won't be able to afford to go on to college and university.

Madam Minister, why are you, through your policies, robbing our working families of the dream to send their children to college and university?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** I think the greatest problem that this province has in getting the message out is that question: robbing students. The exact opposite is the fact.

We have a plan, a continued plan based on experience from every level of government, that college and university students will have a place if they're qualified and if they are willing to go on to post-secondary. Even as enrolment rises, we are working on that plan. The plan is to set aside the kind of financial support in all areas for students so that they can move on and have those hopes and dreams that the leader of the party stated.

I don't know why that kind of question would be asked, because hopes and dreams are a reality for our young people and there will be a place for every qualified and willing student in our colleges and universities.

**Mr McGuinty:** This is not a matter of messaging. Parents understand what they and their children are going through. They are saying you are robbing them of their dreams to send their children on to college and university. It's not an issue of messaging.

Your own report, *Portals and Pathways*, describes in some detail the crisis that you have created. Your report tells us that operating grants for university students have fallen by 29%. Operating grants for college students have fallen by 42%. They also go on to say, "Over the past five years the amount of loan assistance available to students has decreased by \$500 million even though tuition has increased substantially." Your own commission is telling you what we have been telling you and what our parents and children are experiencing: tuition fees have gone up, funding has gone down and there is less money available for our students when it comes to assistance.

I ask you again on behalf of working families: why are you robbing us of the dream to send our kids on to colleges and universities?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** We are preparing for 88,000 more students in our colleges and universities. Last year, with our private sector partners, we set aside \$1.8 billion, the highest amount ever in 30 years, to build for this next generation of young people. We plan to have our public sector stronger than ever.

We capped tuition at a 2% increase a year for the next five years so that parents could plan. We have added over half a billion dollars for student assistance. The universities have set aside one third of the increased tuition so

that students will have the help they need, and the list goes on.

We have a plan. There will be a place for every qualified and willing student to go on to our post-secondary system.

**Mr McGuinty:** Mike Harris and his government have had their hands all over our kids' colleges and universities now for six years and here are the results. After six years, you have produced a system that ranks 59th out of 60 North American states and provinces for investment in post-secondary education. After six years, you have cut altogether \$1.4 billion out of the post-secondary sector. After six years, you have still done nothing to deal with the looming faculty shortage. After six years, you have still done nothing to make room for those 88,000 children who are going to graduate all together.

You may be prepared, Madam Minister, to dismiss them out of hand, but is it any wonder that the overwhelming majority of Ontario parents feel that you are robbing them and their children of a dream that sustained them through their daily struggles? Again, why are you robbing our working families of the dream to send their kids to colleges and universities?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** When I attempted to answer this question earlier in question period today, I said that the leader of the Liberal Party does a lot to contribute to the fears of the young people who want to go on to post-secondary education.

We have never been better prepared for this next generation of young people. We are building some 57 new buildings: \$1.8 billion in capital infrastructure; \$228 million to our access to opportunities program; 23,000 new spaces for students in high-tech programs; \$103 million just last year in operating grants for the current academic year—new dollars; \$550 million in our Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund so those young researchers will want to stay in Ontario and Canada and make our universities even more competitive than they are around the world; \$750 million—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

1430

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, I have a copy of the rules for the northern Ontario heritage fund, and I'm sure that you are familiar with them. One of the rules says, "Projects proposed by an individual business are not eligible." We now understand that the Premier's friends got around that particular rule through a bogus non-profit shell corporation.

But there's another rule that you should also be aware of, Minister, and it says that the "northern Ontario heritage fund ... investment must be necessary to make the project viable."



Sam Yawney, a Sudbury businessman, has been running a professional golf tournament in northern Ontario for years, and he's done so without a nickel of government money. He's proven that professional golf tournaments are indeed viable in the north without government help.

Minister, two clear rules have been broken, and I'm just wondering whose side you're on here. Are you on the side of working families who are worried about you mispending their dollars, or are you on the side of Mike Harris and his friends, who enjoy special advantage?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I say to the Leader of the Opposition he's absolutely correct that private businesses are not eligible to receive money from the northern Ontario heritage fund, unlike when his party was the government. They funded money directly to private businesses, including for-profit ski hills. That's the legacy of the Liberal government.

But it's my understanding that the Ontario Open Heritage Classic included both pros and amateurs, whereas Mr Yawney's tournament is a by-invitation-only golf tournament. His event did not receive the same level of international and national attention.

It is my understanding that Mr Yawney did not submit an application for his tournament to the northern Ontario heritage fund, but should he or anyone else from northern Ontario wish to bring forward an application to the northern Ontario heritage fund, they would of course look at that application.

**Mr McGuinty:** It's very interesting watching the minister try to distinguish between a golf tournament that was held in North Bay and another one that was held near Sudbury.

Here are the facts, Mr Minister: we're talking about two separate golf tournaments. Both were held in the north last summer. Each offered the same prize money. Even the players were basically the same: there were 110 players who were the same in each of those two tournaments. The only difference is that in one case the tournament was run by the Premier's friends; in the other case, in the case of the gentleman from Sudbury, he was told that he need not even bother to apply.

So I'm asking you again, Minister, whose side are you on? Are you on the side of working families who are very concerned about the fact that you are mispending their taxpayer dollars on the Premier's friends, or are you on the side of working families?

**Hon Mr Newman:** In fact, again, my understanding is that Mr Yawney did not make an application to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. So nothing could be rejected, because there was no application brought forward.

It's important that there be international and national attention brought to the golf tournament. His tournament was a by-invitation-only golf tournament. In fact, it's important to note that the tournament that the member opposite is talking about was also held in Sault Ste Marie

in 1999 and he didn't seem to have a problem with that tournament then.

**Mr McGuinty:** All right, you're not prepared to pass judgment on a clear contravention of the rules in the past. Minister, you've made that perfectly clear. Here's something else I want to draw to your attention.

In a speech that Mike Harris made to the board of trade a short while back, he said, "You've told me that what you want is the infrastructure to support all businesses and all economic activity in the region, not grants that favour one business while excluding its competitors." In this case Mike Harris's friends got hundreds of thousands of dollars to operate in direct competition to an honest, hard-working Sudbury businessman. You should know, Minister, that that is wrong.

Again this year these same friends of the Premier are looking for more money. They're asking you to break the rules again. To be specific, they're looking for \$150,000 more.

Minister, it was wrong then; it is wrong now. Whose side are you on: that of Mike Harris and his friends, or Ontario's working families?

**Hon Mr Newman:** The difference between our government and the member opposite's party when they were in government is that we don't fund for-profit companies as his party did when they were in office. They funded in 1989 some \$2.2 million for a for-profit private ski hill.

But the issue the member opposite speaks about, with respect to the application: it underwent the proper due diligence process. I have a letter from my deputy minister, Cam Clark, indicating that the application met the heritage fund's and the tourism program's eligibility criteria and guidelines and, furthermore, that the projects met the key objectives of attracting tourists to northern Ontario and to marketing northern Ontario through national and international television and newspaper coverage.

## WATER QUALITY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Cryptosporidium has killed people in North Battleford. Meanwhile the city of North Bay, which has had cryptosporidium in its water, does without a water filtration plant to protect people from cryptosporidium. At the same time, your government has done away with the provincial water protection fund, the only fund available exclusively to protect drinking water. Chlorine treatment won't kill cryptosporidium. You require a specialized filtration plant, which costs \$20 million.

Minister, are you going to restore the water protection fund in the budget this week or are you going to wait until someone else dies?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** As the leader of the third party is probably aware, we have replaced that fund with the SuperBuild fund, which is providing money for water and sewers. That is

through OSTAR, and that is a \$240-million commitment thus far that has been made.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, you would know that the SuperBuild fund is being used for all and sundry—in fact, not much of it is going to protect drinking water—and you know there's not enough money in OSTAR, and municipalities are telling you that.

I want to ask you about the Premier's comment on April 30 on CFRB radio, where he said, "We don't have enough money in the treasury to protect the environment." Minister, please explain to the people of North Bay and Walkerton and other communities that are boiling their water how it is that your government has money for tax cuts for the well-off but no money to protect the drinking water of our citizens.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** It's clear that the leader of the third party is not aware of the new drinking water regulation that came into effect in August 2000. That regulation applied to large waterworks, it applied to public and private waterworks, and it set some very tough standards. In fact, the standards that have currently been set are the toughest of any jurisdiction in Canada.

Again I indicate to you that the \$240 million that has thus far been put into the OSTAR program is dedicated to be used to ensure that municipalities can move forward.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Final supplementary.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Indeed we are aware of the regulations that you brought in, Minister, and experts and environmentalists say that they are at best short-term solutions and Band-Aid solutions, that what we need is safe drinking water legislation. They've made it very clear that your regulations won't work. You're the one who isn't listening to what needs to be done out there.

I've reintroduced the NDP Safe Drinking Water Act, now called Bill 3. In the past you haven't supported it and you brought in regulations that don't go far enough. What we're saying today, Minister, is that you can do one of two things: you can have more tax cuts for the wealthy or you can restore the provincial water protection fund, bring in the Safe Drinking Water Act and rebuild the Ministry of the Environment to protect our drinking water, to protect our air and our health. Which is it, Minister, safe drinking water that doesn't kill people or more tax cuts for the wealthy?

1440

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** The member should know that we have indicated that we are very concerned and we have moved forward in a way to ensure that there will be safe drinking water.

In fact, I've had an opportunity to take a look at the legislation you've introduced and I just want to comment that the bill you've introduced does mirror some of what we have in the drinking water protection regulation regarding regular and frequent sampling and testing, public access to records of large waterworks, clear notification and use of accredited labs. We have all that.

However, your bill does not have what we have, and that is stringent treatment requirements for all drinking water, submission of comprehensive engineering reports for all waterworks, a review of certificate approvals every three years and, finally, you don't require posting requirements for unsafe drinking water.

## COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, your friend Ralph Klein has had to pay out \$4.1 billion of taxpayers' money in energy rebates because of the rapidly rising cost of deregulated power in Alberta. In California, the state has now had to pay out \$7.5 billion in order to access power because deregulation has failed there.

My question is, how much money is the finance minister of Ontario going to put aside in this year's budget to pay for your scheme of deregulation and privatization of our electricity system?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** There's no need to put any money aside at this point.

**Mr Hampton:** This is the Minister of Energy who two years ago said, "California, here we come. California is the place to copy." Now we see that electricity prices in California have doubled, and doubled again, and they're having to spend \$7.5 billion of taxpayers' money to cover up the failed deregulation.

Minister, a few weeks ago you would have met with representatives of Abitibi-Consolidated, the largest consumer of electricity in Ontario for their five mills. They would have told you that just the 8% increase you announced earlier this year is going to add at least \$15 million to their power bill and they would have told you that it creates major problems for them.

Don't you think it might be a wise idea to set aside some money to help restructure and move some of our basic industries, which won't be able to afford to pay these much higher electricity bills?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Again, Ontario is not a California or Alberta. The problem of increased prices in those jurisdictions is that they hadn't built any new power plants in a number of years and they simply are short of power. Therefore, in a supply-and-demand situation, you would expect prices to go up. In fact, it's a recipe for bankruptcy, and no government in their right mind would go down that road, which is why the honourable member is completely off base.

With respect to Abitibi, let me read to you a paragraph from the letter they sent me a day after our meeting. "Ontario business cannot withstand the inefficiencies of a market that is not truly competitive." They're referring to today's electricity system. "Abitibi-Consolidated has been diligent in preparing for deregulation and will be ready to fully participate," when it comes. In fact, they encouraged me to open the market as soon as possible to competition.



## EDUCATION LEGISLATION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, over one-half million students lost an entire year of clubs and teams as a result of your stubbornness and your refusal to act in a way that would clearly put our students first.

Today in the gallery is Peter Ramsay, who is student premier for the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association. He put out a release today and I want to quote from that release. It says, "Ontario students have suffered immeasurably this year. We have lost valuable teaching time, extracurricular opportunities, post-secondary scholarships and morale as a result of changes introduced to the education system. We demand an apology for the suffering that this government has put Ontario students through this year."

Madam Minister, on behalf of the over 500,000 students who have been affected by your stubbornness and your refusal to put them first, will you now offer them an apology?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Today the government introduced a significant package of initiatives which represents what I think is an excellent compromise, asking every education partner to contribute, to make a change so that we can have for our children this coming school year—we are giving the school boards more flexibility and the teachers more flexibility and more resources so that we will have more teachers able to do remediation, which is something we know some students need, and also more extracurricular, because that is also a service our students very much need.

The only persons who need to apologize in this particular instance are those individuals who looked the students in the eye and said, "No, I'm not going to do this because I have a political fight with the government," or "I have a labour fight with the school board." That's the only apology those students need.

It's not fair to those students to have been caught in the disputes that they were caught in. The government put forward a task force which made significant recommendations. We have accepted those recommendations—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The minister's time is up.

**Mr McGuinty:** We thought the minister had somehow transformed into a kinder, gentler minister who's prepared to put before her a peace offering and to work with teachers, but the old Janet is back. Let that be very clear. She's here to start fighting once again.

One of the downsides of your solution is the fact that class sizes will now be larger at the high school level. We think that is not a good development. We think it means less individual attention for our students. I am asking you now to reconsider that particular aspect of your solution. I am asking you to ensure that you redraft it in such a way that it does not translate into larger class sizes for our students. We think that if you really want to do the

right thing, you'll put students first throughout, and that means you won't increase their class sizes. Will you do that?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** For weeks, all we heard from the Leader of the Opposition was, "What have you done with the task force report? What a great report. Why doesn't the government adopt it?" Well, we have adopted the report, and now the Leader of the Opposition says, "Oh, no, no, that's not what we should be doing."

We know very clearly where the Leader of the Opposition was coming from. His so-called solution to this was to take high school students, whose workload had already increased—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** If the member from Windsor would be quiet, I could finish the point here.

The Leader of the Opposition wants to take the workload of high school students, who have already been asked to do more with the new curriculum—

**The Speaker:** Minister, take a seat. The member for Windsor West, come to order, please.

Sorry for the interruption, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** What the Leader of the Opposition wants to do is to take our high school students, who are already working harder on the new curriculum, and say, "Let's increase their workload so we can decrease the teachers' workload." That is not the solution.

They said, "Accept the task force report." We have accepted the task force report. We've done what our education partners asked for. This is a good—

**The Speaker:** The minister's time is up.

## CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** My question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. It relates to—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Time is continuing on. It is quiet. There is not going to be total silence. The time is going. If you want to ask a question, ask the question.

**Mr Hastings:** It will be an attempt. It's hard when you can't make your words clear. They don't understand.

My question relates to the Condominium Act. Thousands of condominium owners in north Etobicoke and across Ontario will be glad to hear about the new guidelines and regulations that are to be issued by your ministry today. What we would like to know is, what is the scope and design of these particular regulations and how will they enhance quality housing for condominium owners?

1450

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** Indeed this is an important question for over 288,000 residential units which are condominiums in this province. Who would have thought back in 1967 that we would have had that number of people choosing that style of life?

The Condominium Act and the regulations which are appended to it and come into force today offer condominium owners, both present and perhaps people who would like to purchase one, added protection in terms of the amount of disclosure that's required by the condominium corporation to the residential owner and to prospective purchasers.

There are new voting rules which are much more in tune with the realities of condominium corporations and the ownership there. For instance, if in fact a condominium is occupied by mostly tenants, the owners of that building, if they're in a minority, are guaranteed a seat on the board. There are many, many more protections—

**The Speaker:** The minister's time is up. Supplementary?

**Mr Hastings:** Minister, my supplementary relates to the specific benefits of consumer protection arising out of these announced condominium regulation changes.

What I would like to know is, how will these specific guidelines and regulations help working-family condominium owners, condominium boards and, above all, jobs in Ontario—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Mr Speaker, I couldn't hear over the cheers for the member from Etobicoke North exactly the question, but I do know that in his own riding he has many condominium units and has long been an advocate of strengthening the power of the people who reside in them.

This Condominium Act also provides more flexibility toward the creation, the staging of the condominiums, and is indeed a tremendous, tremendous improvement from 1967 and when it was last approved in 1979, and now it's in effect again.

We have produced a pamphlet outlining the rules and the regulations for all buyers and owners, and they have been sent to each of the 288,000 owners across this province so that they know their rights and they will know how good this act is.

I would like to thank each and every member of this Legislature, and even some opposition members, for their support for their support for this particular act, and lastly, I would like to thank the Deputy Premier for his work on it—

**The Speaker:** I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, Ontario Power Generation Inc, the successor company, which is still owned by the people of Ontario, and which holds all of the generating assets of the old Ontario Hydro, reported earlier today its first quarter financial results for the quarter ending March 31, 2001.

Sad to say that operating income is down and down sharply. Net income is down and down sharply. Earnings per common share are down and down significantly. Revenues, interestingly, are up, we are told in part

because there has been less competition for Ontario Power Generation in this past quarter.

Anybody reading this report would have to conclude a couple of things: firstly, this report is going to mean more bad news for the people of Ontario because undoubtedly this is going to increase the indebtedness that the people of Ontario have guaranteed. Secondly, and this is my question, what do you and your officials believe will be the impact on electricity rates once the market opens in May 2002, as both you and the Premier have indicated?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** We don't see that in the report at all. I don't know who's doing your analysis these days. They've had a banner year at OPG and in fact they've been able to provide us with \$1 billion to put toward the legacy of debt that your government and previous governments left, and that's terrific news. It's one of the largest debt payments we've ever made in the history of this province, and it all comes as a result of the strong turnaround management that we put in place some six years ago.

**Mr Conway:** It's the same old story. Just months ago we had the Provincial Auditor and we had Energy Probe saying that not a great deal is changing. The indebtedness that is going to be the responsibility of the people of Ontario under your scheme last year went up. This report would suggest that it's going up again. Costs are up. The rehabilitation of Pickering is higher than expected. The pension costs are higher than expected. Other costs are higher than expected. Revenues are improved because there's less competition, we are told, than was expected.

You are—we are, in a sense—in a complete conflict of interest. Would you agree to this so that the people of Ontario might get some second opinion, some oversight of this incredibly and extraordinarily important policy? Are you, on behalf of your government, prepared today to agree with me that we should establish, and soon, a select committee of this Legislature with specific oversight responsibility for this so-called new electricity policy so that the people and the taxpayers and ratepayers of Ontario won't be finding out all the bad news three and five years from now when you're gone, the rates are up and Ron Osborne is out cashing in very lucrative stock options?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Pickering is not over budget. The pension fund is not costing us more money than anticipated. OPG, with its very strong year—I'm going to correct myself—was able to provide to put toward the debt this year property taxes and dividends and corporate income taxes that totalled over \$1 billion. These revenues are dedicated to retiring the legacy of debt and liabilities of Ontario Hydro.

Even after these payments, Ontario Power Generation's cash position is strengthened in shareholders' equity. We've increased our equity by \$400 million this year. So the company is not only producing more money to pay toward the debt; it's in a stronger financial position and better with respect to the books and the shareholders' position.



Finally, we're very proud of this company. Whoever told you its position is weakened because of less competition must know nothing about the 93-year electricity system we've had in this province. It owns 90% of the generation. It never has had any significant competition. So you've given such a complete—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** New question.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of Education. As we welcome Education Week in Ontario, parents and students across the province are interested in knowing that the government is taking the right steps to ensure that students receive the best possible education.

Today in Pickering the minister made some significant announcements. Will the minister inform the House as to how these will benefit students in Waterloo-Wellington and across the province?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I think this week was an appropriate time to announce the package that we did, being Education Week, which gives us an opportunity to celebrate, to congratulate and to thank all of the members of our public education system for the hard work and the excellence that they produce on a daily basis.

What we announced this week were additional resources on top of the money that we announced last month. So we're looking at \$360 million more, new dollars, for our education system. That's going out flexibly to school boards so they can address local priorities. But we've also made some significant changes to make sure that our schools and our teachers have the resources and the flexibility that they need to provide more remediation for those students who might require help with the new curriculum and also to ensure that extracurricular, co-instructional activities, which are very important to our students, can also be provided for our students in all schools.

**Mr Arnott:** I want to thank the minister for that excellent answer, and I'm pleased to hear that the government is putting students first.

The additional funding that the minister has announced today is welcome news for Ontario parents and students alike. I want to say that initiatives like she talked about today include some welcome news on co-instructional activities, or, as we used to call them, extracurricular activities.

Parents and students in my riding would like to know, how does your announcement advance this issue?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We've made a couple of changes, as I said. We've put in place more resources that school boards and schools can use flexibly. We have also changed the rules around the definition of the instructional time standard so that things like extra remediation time and on-call for teachers who might be doing extracurricular activities can be part of what's recognized and funded for our schools. This is a package that not only

the task force but also our education partners asked us to put in place. They said this would work.

We are proclaiming one piece of Bill 74, the legislation that says school boards should put in place plans for extracurricular activities in their high schools. We're also going to be withdrawing the section of Bill 74 that could have made it mandatory for a teacher in elementary or secondary to do extracurriculars. So we have withdrawn that. I think that's an exceptionally good sign for the teachers.

This is what our education partners said would work and we've been very pleased to put this in place.

1500

### TUITION FEES

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Madam, under your tutelage, tuition fees have gone up 60%. Under the same tutelage, deregulated programs such as medicine and law have gone up over 500%—I think it's 521%. Cuts in funding, cumulatively, have been in the range of two billion bucks. This is well documented stuff. Loans to students, at least to those who qualify for loans, have not kept up with the kinds of increases they have had to suffer under your government with the tuition fee increases in the last five years. A Stats Canada study revealed that students from lower-income families are choosing not to go to university.

I say to you, as you argue that you have the facts, these are the real facts. Ipsos-Reid says that four out of five parents say that even if their kids are qualified, they won't make it to university. These people are calling for a \$500-million investment in universities. Are you going to listen to them?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** Of course we're listening to parents and students. There are public meetings across this province in our colleges and universities and in our secondary schools. They're telling us they want a place for every willing and qualified student and we're telling them we have a plan that will make that happen.

We started with the capital dollars, \$1.9 billion, with private sector partners, to create new buildings, the largest increase in capital spending in over 30 years. That is the right thing to do and that was the right place to start.

The second issue we dealt with was student assistance. The questioner is not quite right, because in fact we have increased and we have built in more assistance for our students. So students who are concerned should be applying, working hard, and the student assistance will be there for them.

**Mr Marchese:** Minister, that's why I gave you the statistical information, because what you say doesn't jibe with what is well documented. Tuition fees have gone up, and in the deregulated programs they have gone up 500%. In terms of your funding, cumulatively it's \$2 billion less than before. Your capital expenditures are half

of what we used to spend and they certainly will be insufficient to deal with the 90,000 students who are going to come into the system in the next couple of years. You're simply not listening to people's concerns.

A majority of Ontario parents are willing to give up their tax cut, so afraid are they that their kids are not going to make it to university. In my view, you can't betray four out of five Ontario parents who are worried about not being able to afford it. This is not a luxury we are talking about; these people say it's a necessity. What they're asking you is to give back the \$500 million you have taken out, and give it back in a hurry, in order to address the needs that are there.

We need university professors, we need to accommodate the 90,000 students who are coming aboard, and your plan is not working. It's not there. I'm asking you to fight for the money we need in the next budget that's coming on Wednesday. Will you do that?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** This comes from a member whose party increased tuition 10% every year that they were in government.

We have indeed capped our fee increases to a maximum of 2% a year for five years. This is in order that parents can plan. We have the highest rate of participation of post-secondary-education students in Ontario's history, and that will go up. Some 36% of our 18- to 24-year-olds attend our post-secondary institutions.

We are doing two things that previous governments have never done. We are first of all providing the most financial assistance ever offered to students in Ontario. Not only have we said that our OSAP is there for students who need it, but we have in fact increased that amount. We have enhanced the Ontario graduate scholarship program so that more students will benefit. We have increased the Ontario student opportunity trust fund, which has raised \$600 million so that—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a question for the Minister of the Environment I want to come back to the very serious situation we raised in the House several months ago—it was raised again today—of cryptosporidium in drinking water in Ontario.

You will recall that I think it was Collingwood, Ontario, and Thunder Bay, Ontario, both had episodes of cryptosporidium, and you will remember that there are at least 30 municipalities in Ontario that do not have proper water filtration systems. Cryptosporidium is very serious. In Milwaukee it killed over 100 people in one episode. I think there were 4,000 people hospitalized, about 400,000 people who were sick.

North Bay and these other municipalities are very vulnerable to cryptosporidium because they do not have a water filtration system. The real issue, it seems to me, is the timing of that. You have required it by the end of 2002. Will you undertake today in this House to assure

the House that you will provide a special fund immediately to those municipalities so that they can immediately put in place a water filtration system that will protect them from cryptosporidium?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** I certainly share the concerns of the member regarding cryptosporidium in the water. We've seen what has happened, not only in Milwaukee but also more recently in North Battleford. We express our sympathy and our concern to the people in Saskatchewan.

In our own province, as you know, we do have the toughest water regulations presently. In order to reduce the risk of cryptosporidium, we do ensure that all drinking supplies are filtered and chemically treated. Yes, we have met with North Bay, and obviously we need to work collaboratively with these communities throughout Ontario to ensure that we continue to have the safest drinking water possible.

**Mr Bradley:** The minister probably recognizes—I'm not convinced her colleagues do—there's a greater urgency to this matter that she and I would know about than perhaps many of her colleagues in the House. This is why I think there's a need for an accelerated funding regime for these municipalities. You have Sudbury—it seems to me it's the David Street pumping station—that does not have a filtration system yet. As I say, there are 30 municipalities. All are vulnerable to attack from cryptosporidium. You've had a boil-water in the Premier's own riding, just as the House came back finally after four months in April, and they had the same boil-water last year.

Minister, it seems to me that the real issue, again, is getting that money to the municipalities immediately so that they can start work on these projects for water filtration immediately. I'm asking the minister if she will undertake at the next cabinet meeting to secure from the person beside her, the provincial Treasurer, the necessary special funding for this particular program. I will support her in this. I know she'll meet some sharp elbows in dealing with the tightwads who are in the cabinet, those who have money for golf tournaments and huge corporate tax cuts. Rather than huge corporate tax cuts and golf tournaments, would you convert that money into funding for municipalities to meet the cryptosporidium crisis?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I share the concerns of the member opposite. As he also knows, there is presently no Canadian national guideline for cryptosporidium. There's no test that can confidently detect it either. That's why it is important that there are filtration and chemical treatments, and of course they are mandatory under our regulation.

So we do have in place, as I've indicated before in the House this afternoon, a \$240-million OSTAR program, which is intended to ensure that all of our municipalities have in place a system that is going to provide them with the safe water that we have indicated is going to be absolutely necessary.



1510

## TRANSPORTATION STUDY

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, largely as a result of the Harris government policies, the last five years have seen tremendous economic growth in the Niagara region, as well as other parts of Ontario. Because of the impact this growth is having on Niagara's transportation infrastructure, this government took the proactive step of initiating a transportation needs assessment study in conjunction with the region of Niagara. Can you explain the depth of the study, what modes of transportation are being studied and when we can expect the results of this study?

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** This needs study came about as a result of tourism pressures, trade pressures and residential development growth in the Niagara region, which has experienced tremendous growth overall. There's also the concern the government has about the tender fruit lands along the Niagara Escarpment. This particular study is the most comprehensive study ever conducted in the province of Ontario. It's covering more topics and more territory than ever before. It covers all transportation options being considered, including highway, public transit, rail, even cross-lake ferry.

Hamilton, Haldimand, Niagara, Halton—all of these municipalities have given tremendous accolades to the government for doing this study, and the study should be finished around the middle of June.

**Mr Maves:** Minister, I'd like to point out to you, though, that some of my constituents have contacted me with concerns about the proposal for a mid-peninsula corridor. With many of our businesses located along the Queen Elizabeth Way, some of my local businessmen are concerned about traffic being diverted to an alternate route and the potential loss of business. As well, some are concerned that existing businesses may relocate to cheap land on the new highway. Finally, with the route bypassing Niagara Falls, shouldn't the region be concerned about a potential loss of tourism dollars?

**Hon Mr Clark:** I can understand why some of the businesses in the member's community might have concerns, but the reality is that tourism is up and growing in Niagara; trade is up and growing in the Niagara region; residential growth is growing in the Niagara region; not to mention that agriculture is growing. At the end of the day, there's a huge growth and development in the economy of the Niagara region and we have to recognize the impact that is having on the QEW.

As a result of this needs study, the next step we'll move to is an environmental assessment process, which is a true consultation. All of the public will have an opportunity to consult, the businesses will have an opportunity to consult and we'll have a better understanding of the impacts of this corridor, both positively and potentially negatively, on this businesses in the community.

They will all have an opportunity to come forth and be heard, and we'll help them as best we can.

## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I believe she's here. Here is the minister now. You may continue.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Minister, as you know, the double-cohort issue has many parents and students who are currently in grades 10 and 11 extremely worried, anxious and upset about their prospects for a post-secondary education. By the year 2003, an additional 90,000 students will be applying for positions. You've provided some funding for additional accommodation, but there's absolutely no plan in place and there's no additional funding for operating money, which is severely needed by the universities and colleges for teaching staff and other resources.

I have a very specific question of you that the parents and the students in grades 10 and 11 want to know. The question is simply this: what guarantees and assurances can you give to those students who will qualify for admission to colleges and universities on the basis of the same secondary school exiting requirements, including the current range of marks used for admission by faculty that are now in place? Can you give those additional 90,000 students who will be coming on to the scene for colleges and universities that assurance, that they will be judged along the same lines as students currently are—or will, in effect, the entrance be upgraded?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** In response to the excellent question from the member for Kingston and the Islands, this is a very serious question that is being asked. To respond, I'd like to advise the member that the Council of Ontario Universities working group that works with the ministry and with myself has been dealing with this particular issue for quite a long period of time, and we ourselves in our ministry, and I as the minister, have been assured that the range of marks—I think I'm using your words correctly in this regard—and the work of the working group, that these are the same standards that we have now that will carry on into the future.

I invite the member to work with me with regard to a report that we have received. I would be very happy to share it with him.

**Mr Gerretsen:** We are less than two years away from 90,000 additional students coming into the system. In your own letter to a constituent of mine on February 15 of this year, you indicated that the universities expect an enrolment growth of only 23.6%, and the same thing can be said with respect to the colleges, who expect the double-cohort issue to be with them for five years. Ninety thousand students will not be getting the same kind of educational opportunities as other students are

right now. This is an entire lost generation that has come about because of your inactivity and your lack of planning.

What are you going to do today to give assurances to those parents and students who are now in grade 10 and 11 that they will have the same opportunities as their brothers and sisters will have?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** I will stand by the numbers in the letter I sent out. The 23.6%, or in that range, is a huge number of students. It's about 88,000 more students. This is not our number. This is the number that comes up through the system with data which has been collected through the colleges and universities over time. That's the best projection that they can give to us: 88,000 more students. We did in fact put out \$1.8 billion, because buildings take three or four years to build, so now we have \$1.8 billion in new buildings, which is where we started.

The member has asked about the standards. We are proud of our standards in Ontario. We want them to be better, if we can make them better. It is, in fact, the universities and colleges themselves that are monitoring all of the implications of the question, and I can assure the member that if he wants to see the work, he's most welcome.

#### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Solicitor General. Minister, the province of Ontario is not immune to major emergencies. We were reminded of this just a few years ago by the ice storm that devastated eastern Ontario. In my own riding of Northumberland, annually they celebrate the Float Your Fanny Down the Ganny, which was a major flood in Port Hope. Also, in November 1994, there was a major VIA train accident in the town of Brighton. Minister, what are you and your ministry doing and going to do to ensure that communities in Ontario are indeed prepared for emergencies?

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** I thank the member for Northumberland. Ontario is prepared for threats against public safety. Emergency Measures Ontario is responsible for co-ordinating provincial emergency management and administering the Emergency Plans Act on behalf of the Solicitor General.

Ontario maintains plans for dealing with nuclear emergencies, all hazard emergencies and acts of terrorism. The Provincial Emergency Information Plan ensures that emergency response information is delivered to the public. The ministry's safe communities program provides assistance and advice to communities to supplement their emergency management plans. This government is committed to ensuring the safety of all citizens of Ontario.

1520

**Mr Galt:** As we heard earlier, this week is Emergency Preparedness Week. Communities all over the province and indeed the country will be participating. The

community of Port Hope in my riding has shown commitment in this area and has reached the "essential" level under the partnerships towards safer communities program, for which they will be awarded a certificate of achievement tomorrow evening. On Saturday, May 12, there will be the annual Emergency Services Day in the village of Warkworth, which is indeed a very informative day for those citizens.

Will you please tell the House and the people of Northumberland about Emergency Preparedness Week?

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** Emergency Preparedness Week takes place each year in May. This year's theme is "Reducing the risk: toward safer communities in the 21st century."

In Ontario, more than 75 communities have proclaimed this week to be Emergency Preparedness Week. Local fire, police and ambulance services have partnered with local schools, hospitals and the media, as well as businesses and community groups. They are all working together to promote the importance of emergency preparedness.

Emergency Measures Ontario will present certificates of achievement to the cities of Thunder Bay, Hamilton, London, Port Hope, Barrie and Cornwall for their outstanding efforts in emergency management.

This government supports Emergency Preparedness Week, and will continue to work with all levels of government and communities to promote a safer Ontario.

#### POLICE COMPLAINTS

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** My question is to the Attorney General. Last week on the television we saw a disturbing videotape of an Ottawa police officer bashing a woman's head into the hood of a car. Ottawa police are investigating the incident. It is now being reported that other women are coming forward with similar stories. Increasingly, we've seen women strip searched after being charged with the most minor of offences.

Minister, won't you help us get to the root of these violent and unwarranted police practices? Why don't you order an independent investigation of the Ottawa incident and show that your government stands behind its zero-tolerance policy against violence and bullying?

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** As the member opposite is likely aware, there is a procedure when there are concerns of the sort that he has referenced, a procedure that involves a comprehensive investigation taking place, and that is underway. In the circumstances, I am not in a position to comment further upon it at this time.

**Mr Kormos:** Well, Attorney General, here's a direct quote. Last week you said, "All Ontarians have a right to personal safety and security. Each person should be able to walk along streets without fear...."

"Over the past five and a half years, the Mike Harris government has taken great strides"—that's what you



told us—"to ensure that Ontarians can not only be safe but feel safe," as they go about their lives.

Attorney General, there is a woman in Ottawa who doesn't feel safe, and didn't feel safe, and for good reason. This is all a crock unless you order an independent investigation into this videotaped example of police brutality. You have failed miserably on so many fronts to guarantee the safety of citizens, why not partially redeem yourself by calling an independent inquiry that's within your jurisdiction—you've got the power to do it—and tell us who you will assign to carry out this task?

**Hon Mr Young:** I thank the member for the question, but I'm not quite sure what it is he desires. I thought he believed in the system that we now have in place. I thought he believed in a system that allowed for an immediate and comprehensive investigation to take place by an independent body. I thought he supported that. Apparently I was wrong, but I thought he was against the idea of a politician running roughshod over a system that has been acknowledged and accepted by every stakeholder in this community.

I believe in the system we have, I believe in its independence, and I look forward to allowing it to have the time it needs in order to resolve the issues he has raised in this Legislature.

#### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Before we begin petitions, I would ask all members to join in welcoming our group of Legislative pages serving in the second session of the 37th Parliament.

We have Marko Balan from Parkdale-High Park; Phil Birnbaum from Oak Ridges; Christopher Black from Prince Edward-Hastings; Katie Cook from Niagara Falls; Lisa-Marie Coulter from Vaughan-King-Aurora; Rhianon Cowley-Owen from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell; Sean King from Parry Sound-Muskoka; Kayla Kwinter from Eglinton-Lawrence; Ben Lindner from Perth-Middlesex; Alexander Massaad from York North; Donna Nguyen from Davenport; Mark Niglas from Windsor West; Tyler Nixon from Cambridge; Joanne Paul from Leeds-Grenville; Stephen Prankie from Etobicoke-Lakeshore; Tyler Putzer from London-Fanshawe; Thomas Robertson from Beaches-East York; Claire Schiller from Burlington; Vernissia Tam from Markham; Danielle Vanhie from Elgin-Middlesex-London; and Sabrina Wirz from Kitchener Centre.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There's a rumour circulating about the use of this House that you may be able to help me with. I notice that there's a lot of room up in the press gallery all the time, a lot of space up there. Is it true that you are planning to extend the public galleries into the press gallery because of lack of use of the press gallery? Is that true or not?

**The Speaker:** Rumours are running rampant; that's not one of them.

#### PETITIONS

##### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This petition is to the Ontario Legislature. It's northerners demanding that the Mike Harris government eliminate health care apartheid.

"Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation," which is unfair;

"Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location," which is a fact;

"Whereas a recently released Oracle research poll confirms that 92% of Ontarians support equal health travel funding;

"Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province; and

"Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Loughheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which presently exists in the province of Ontario."

I affix my signature as I'm in agreement with it.

##### CHILD CARE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has cut funding for regulated child care spaces in Ontario by 15% between 1995 and 1998;

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has yet to implement the recommendations of its own commission's Early Years report by Dr Fraser Mustard to create a seamless, integrated early years education system;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million over the next five years from the federal government for early years development projects;

"Whereas the Conservative government lags behind other provinces in announcing its plans for the \$844 million; and

"Whereas other provinces are implementing innovative, affordable and accessible child care programs, such as Quebec's \$5-a-day child care; and

"Whereas the need for affordable, accessible, regulated child care and family resource centres continues to grow in Ontario:

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Harris government immediately match and earmark a significant portion of the \$844 million from the federal government for expanded regulated child care spaces and family resource centres."

This petition was put together by about 257 people, done by a child care centre in Ottawa, Strath-MacLean, and I'd like to thank the staff and the families for their support.

### HORSE RIDING SAFETY

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas an increasing number of Ontarians are turning to horseback riding as a recreational activity; and

"Whereas many of these inexperienced riders are children; and

"Whereas currently there are no minimum safety standards regulating riding establishments; and

"Whereas coroners' inquests into horse riding fatalities from as long ago as 1977 have called for the mandatory use of riding helmets and boots; and

"Whereas an unacceptable number of preventable injuries and fatalities have occurred while horseback riding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass into law the private member's bill introduced by Tina Molinari, MPP for Thornhill, entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, in order to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used, and to amend the Highway Traffic Act and make it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to ride a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment."

I affix my name to this petition.

1530

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it has been determined that recent funding allocations to the developmental services sector in the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent, and Windsor-Essex have been determined to be grossly inadequate to meet critical and urgent needs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Community and Social Services immediately review the funding allocations to the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and

Windsor-Essex, and provide funding in keeping with the requests made by families and/or their agents."

I affix my signature to this petition.

### BRAIN TUMOURS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** A petition signed by 14 people.

"Whereas early detection and treatment of brain tumours are vital to survive from this devastating disease;

"Whereas brain tumours strike people of all ages, from newborns to seniors, crossing all economic, social and ethnic boundaries and all walks of life;

"Whereas brain tumours are the most common cause of solid cancer in children; and

"Whereas brain tumour research, patient and family support services and awareness among the general public are essential to promote early detection and treatment of brain tumours.

"We, the undersigned, therefore respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario to pass a law proclaiming the month of October in each year as Brain Tumour Awareness Month."

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we believe that universally accessible, publicly funded health care is sacred and must be protected;

"Whereas Mike Harris intends on turning his back on working families and transforming our system into an American-style, two-tier system where only the rich will get quality care;

"Whereas we believe that Mike Harris has a secret agenda to promote two-tier health care in Ontario and now the secret is out;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Do not turn your back on Ontario's working families. Fight Mike Harris's agenda to destroy medicare and fight his plan to create a two-tier health care system."

I sign my name to this, Mr Speaker, and give this over to Philip.

### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;



"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

Since I am in agreement, I'm happy to sign my name to it.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We the undersigned residents of, and visitors to, the county of Prince Edward petition the government of Ontario to recognize that the uncontrolled spread of intensive livestock operations and the field application of liquid manure poses a profound threat to our water, both ground and surface. Additionally, we have petitioned the government to acknowledge that the adverse effects of industrial livestock operations are widespread and have a deleterious effect on our environment, on our air and on our quality of life, and;

"Whereas under the existing laws of the province of Ontario there are no adequate controls directing the operation of such industrial farming operations, and;

"Whereas municipal bylaws are inadequate or non-existent and therefore controls should be exercised at the provincial level, and;

"Whereas the Ontario Environmental Commissioner recognizes in his report the potential for serious pollution of both our air and water from these operations;

"We therefore petition the Ontario Legislative Assembly to expedite the passing of legislation to regulate the operation of intensive livestock operations, specifically the spreading of manure therefrom and to distinguish such industrial operations from traditional farming practices."

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to have one of our new pages, Tyler Nixon, who's from Temple Baptist Christian Academy, take my petition to the table.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is a well-known fact that cattle are a significant source of dangerous strains of E coli bacteria; and

"Whereas cattle can be a serious source of degradation to rivers, streams and lakes through (1) defecating in or near the water, (2) breaking down and trampling banks and beaches, and (3) destroying vegetation in riparian zones; and

"Whereas many farmers permit their cattle to enter lakes and streams as a source of water;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully request the government of Ontario to pass binding legislation to establish mandatory setbacks for all watercourses, lakes and wetlands to prevent landowners or tenants from using

such watercourses, lakes and wetlands as a source of water for cattle or other animals;

"We further respectfully request that the legislation be drafted in such a way that it cannot be overturned by the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board or any other special-interest group."

I'm pleased to receive and present this petition on their behalf.

#### SAFE STREETS LEGISLATION

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** I have a petition from a non-profit organization from the village of Embrun.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas charities such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada, the Goodfellows, the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, firefighters and many others participate in fundraising on streets, sidewalks and parking lots; and

"Whereas the Safe Streets Act, 1999, effectively bans these types of activities, putting police forces in the position of ignoring the law or hindering legitimate charities; and

"Whereas charitable organizations are dependent on these fundraisers to raise much-needed money and awareness;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We ask that the government of Ontario amend provincial legislation by passing Bill 64, the Safe Streets Amendment Act, 2000, to allow charitable organizations to conduct fundraising campaigns on roadways, sidewalks and parking lots."

I add my signature to the petition.

#### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads in part:

"Whereas Canada is a nation built by immigrant settlement; and

"Whereas the majority of new Canadians settle in Ontario; and

"Whereas effective settlement programs assist newcomers to integrate quickly into the economic and social fabric of Ontario's society; and

"Whereas fair funding is an essential component to effective settlement and the federal government is responsible for determining immigrant quotas; and

"Whereas" Ottawa "has entered into an agreement with Quebec to guarantee settlement funding regardless of target fulfillment; and

"Whereas no such agreement exists with other provinces, leading to inequitable settlement funding; and

"Whereas many new immigrants and refugees are denied access to basic settlement services as well as health, education, and ESL opportunities,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario will demand of Ottawa a similar immigration agreement with Ontario as that in Quebec, continue to encourage change in the immigration process to solve the plight of newcomers and their children, and address the issues of homelessness, hunger and poverty for new Canadians."

I'm delighted to attach my signature to this petition.

1540

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I have a petition which reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas domestic violence detrimentally impacts on the very survival of thousands of women in Ontario;

"Whereas the sole emphasis on punitive measures ignores that only a small fraction of domestic violence cases get to, let alone get through, the justice system;

"Whereas issues of prevention, investigation and redress of domestic violence need immediate and meaningful attention by the Legislature;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"(a) provide funding for second-stage housing, emergency shelters and to organizations concerned with domestic violence;

"(b) provide training on domestic violence issues for police, lawyers, judges and justices of the peace;

"(c) address recommendations from the May-Iles inquest regarding the capacity of this province to prevent, investigate and redress acts of violence in the family;

"(d) promote studies on the causes, nature, prevalence and consequences of domestic violence and on the capacities in Ontario to prevent, investigate and redress acts of violence in the family."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

### POVERTY

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we are seniors and low-income people finding it very hard to live and pay all expenses every day; and

"Whereas with all the increases in our utilities in the last several months, we no longer can afford to have a warm house, or buy enough of a variety of foods, or buy some of the drugs that we desperately need; and

"Whereas we feel helpless, abandoned, and totally neglected by our own government; and

"Whereas, without some sort of assistance from our government, either in terms of subsidy or lowering the cost of utilities, especially the gas for heating, we will have to seriously limit the quality and quantity of prescription drugs, or decide to buy food or pay the ever-increasing utility costs;

"We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to help us live in dignity and with compassion and care."

I concur with the content of the petition and I will affix my signature to it.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### ONTARIO STUDENT LOAN HARMONIZATION ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'HARMONISATION DES PRÊTS D'ÉTUDES DE L'ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 3, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** Thank you, Speaker.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Are you going to take the full hour?

**Mr Marchese:** You know that I need the entire hour to be able to communicate all the things that I want to—  
*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Speaker, I'm happy to be able to debate this Bill 19. I just want to let folks know that it's a quarter to 4 of the clock and I should be on for approximately one hour. I hope to be able to cover as much as I possibly can, because post-secondary education is a serious concern for the majority of Ontarians out there. I'll refer—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Well, it's true and you know that. I'll make reference to the poll that was just released today at a press conference that speaks to the profound worries that parents have—parents and non-parents alike. In fact, even more people without children are now worried about the fact that many young people are not going to get to university or college than those with kids, but nevertheless it's very high.

Speaking briefly and then making all the arguments that are connected to this issue: Bill 19, some argue, is just a little housekeeping thing. The federal government of course had to take over student loans from the banks because high default rates did not make lending to students sufficiently profitable. This bill's accomplishing the same principle is the point of it.

Isn't it funny that when the private sector says, "We're not making money out of this venture," they just give it right back to the government? When they make money and sufficient profits they say, "Give it to us. We like it. We'll deliver it more efficiently." This is the problem with these kinds of programs, because as soon as the



private sector, in this case the banks, realizes there is no pecunia to be made out of this deal, they say, "We're out." Of course, who is again back in the field to provide the loans? It's the good old government.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Maybe just not enough pecunia.

**Mr Marchese:** Well, they weren't making enough—no, obviously, they were—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** You're quite right, Peter. They might have made a couple of bucks out of it, but they said to themselves, "Is it worth the headache?" Is it worth the headache to have such a program when the money, as Peter said, is not high enough? It's not worth the administration, the headaches, the worries of a program unless the profits are high enough. That's what the private sector is all about. I wanted to make that point, because that's really what this bill is all about.

Then, of course, I wanted to talk about the real problems in education, because that's what, in my view, we have to talk about.

I was reminded yesterday of an argument that the Minister of Labour made in relation to a question when he used comparisons. I'll refer to it so that it makes sense and so that I won't make any mistakes in paraphrasing the minister. But our leader was talking about increasing the minimum wage, and it's something that New Democrats feel strongly about because there are a whole lot of people in the service sector earning just a meagre sum of money.

**Mr Kormos:** It's \$6.85.

**Mr Marchese:** What they earn is \$6.85 an hour.

**Mr Kormos:** For six years now.

**Mr Marchese:** For a whole long time.

**Mr Kormos:** When the Tories wanted to increase their salaries by 42%, what did they give people on minimum wage?

**Mr Marchese:** Those on minimum wage just have to live with \$6.85 an hour. And, yes, it's been a whole long six years. "Too bad, so sad," the Minister of Labour says. "Not my problem. It's not my problem that they're earning that much. In fact," he says, "we're very competitive."

Here's his response to our leader in this regard. I'll read the whole thing. "During the 1990s, the minimum wage was raised by 37%." We're proud of that. We were proud of raising the minimum wage because we think a whole lot of people out there, working people, just earning a meagre sum of money deserve a little more, especially in the cities, where you just can't live on that kind of money. You just can't, unless of course you tighten your belts on all matters of necessity, such as eating, how you dress, clothing. I suppose you could just wear anything, really. It doesn't have to be something that is, what—

**Mr Kormos:** It doesn't have to be a suit and tie.

**Mr Marchese:** It doesn't have to be suit and tie, surely not. It could just be a shirt, whatever, a pair of pants, it doesn't matter; whatever shoes you can wear so

not as to walk on, who knows, glass on the street. It doesn't matter, I suppose. But some people like to dress somewhat decently if they can afford it. But a whole lot of people, at \$6.85, can't afford decent clothes. They can't afford decent food and they certainly can't afford the kinds of rents that we are witnessing under your government—

**Mr Kormos:** The Harris government.

**Mr Marchese:** —under the Harris government, of late. In the last couple of years rents have skyrocketed—\$1,300 a month for a two-bedroom apartment. We're talking about people who, out of the 3.3 million tenants, earn what? Less than \$23,000. A third of them probably earn less than \$23,000 a year. Do you know what that means? It's hard for those of us earning \$80,000 to relate to it, but try to relate to someone earning \$23,000 a year, living in these private sector apartments; earning that much and paying so much rent. Why? You people decided you wanted to decontrol rents, because controlling rents, you said, was bad, bad, bad. And you said once you decontrol rents, the building of private sector accommodation is just going to shoot right up.

**Mr Kormos:** What a joke.

**Mr Marchese:** It's not just a joke, it's pitiful. It's foolish. We knew that you weren't going to build.

So the point I make is that a whole lot of people earn so little. The New Democrats, yes, of course, with pride say we need to increase the minimum wage, and we did. And Stockwell reminds us of that. I go on.

"There was a fairly substantial increase to the minimum wage at that time. We understood that fact. When we came into government, there was a 37% increase," he repeats again. "We are very competitive with neighbouring jurisdictions. We rank third in Canada, and we're very competitive with our neighbours to the south."

"The arguments that you," referring to our leader, "continue to put forward are premised on I'm not sure exactly what," he says. "From our comparative notes and studies that we've done, we are not at the top, agreed, but we aren't anywhere near the bottom of the minimum wage in this country. We are at the top third of provinces in this country. So as far as I'm concerned, the minimum wage needs to be at a competitive rate. The competitive rate that we have pegged it at, at this point in time, we think is competitive and, by jurisdiction, a fair remuneration."

Anyway, it was a whole lot of blah.

1550

To simply say that if you use comparisons—he says, "We're not up here in terms of the minimum wage, but we're not down here." I found the argument interesting, because if you use that argument on the basis of minimum wage—by the way, we disagree with him on that. But if you use that argument, following his logic, if we applied it to education, we've got serious problems because, good citizens, when it comes to education, in a study called *Missing Pieces II, An Alternative Guide to Canadian Post-Secondary Education: Provincial Rankings*, where do the provinces stand on education? On the

issue of provincial expenditures per capita, we're number nine, and on the per capita university operating grants we're number 10.

The point I wanted to make is that on these rankings we are, generally speaking, at the very bottom. If you follow the logic of Stockwell, we are in trouble and we ought to be addressing this problem, because clearly we are not spending near the level we should be spending at to be competitive. You follow what I'm saying, Speaker? I quoted Stockwell as a way of making sure the Tories who are listening in this House understand that on the basis of comparisons, we're here at the bottom. It speaks to the fact that the underfunding of our post-secondary education is serious enough that this government ought to worry about it and that, good citizens, on the basis of comparisons alone we are not competitive within Canada, and certainly we're not competitive when we consider the United States. We rank, I'm not sure, 52 out of 53 or 54 jurisdictions in North America. We are, good citizens of Ontario and taxpayers of Ontario, at the bottom of the barrel.

M. Stockwell, mon ami, when he reflects on this and when he speaks again to this issue of minimum wages, might be careful, because when he makes that comparison people like Marchese are going to make the other comparison with respect to post-secondary education as a way of trying to convince him that he has to, when using the same logic, come to the same conclusion I am, and that is, we've got a big problem in this province.

Today, there was a release of polling done by Ipsos-Reid which shows that parents of this province and non-parents alike are very concerned about what's happening with respect to issues of accessibility and young people's ability to get to a college and a university. They're so profoundly worried that they're directing this government to fix the problem. The polls say that increased provincial funding garners the support of Ontarians across all the major political parties, including decided New Democrats, 74%, decided Liberals, 69%, and Progressive Conservatives, 53%.

It's a staggering figure, because while you might think it's only New Democrats and, to a great extent, Liberal supporters who think we've got an access problem, Tories believe the same thing.

Sixty-eight per cent of women are more likely than men—59% of them—to opt for increased provincial funding, even though this may result in a cancellation of the planned tax cuts or reduced spending in other areas.

It's a remarkable finding. I suggest, Speaker, to you and your caucus that you have to pay attention to these things. This is a large number of people. This is Ipsos-Reid polling, someone that you are very familiar with, so I'm not sure you're disputing the figures, who is saying to you that two thirds of the population is profoundly worried about the direction in which you are moving and so concerned that they're saying to you, "You've got to listen to what we're saying." I'm not quite sure who you're listening to.

My sense is that you've got a revenue problem. I'm not quite sure what you will announce when the budget comes forth, but the economy has definitely slowed down, so you have a revenue problem again. While you didn't have a revenue problem from 1995 to the year 2000, you are about to experience a funding problem, a revenue problem.

While you could have fixed the problems connected to health and education—elementary, secondary and post-secondary—you didn't. You took money out of the system. You won't be able to put much back into the system because, continuing with your desire to give the kinds of income tax cuts that you people are committed to, you won't have the money.

In the next two years, you're going to blow 12 billion bucks—gone, out the window—and you won't be able to get it back again. You people won't tax these folks again, so \$12 billion is going out and less revenue is coming in. Income tax cuts are going out to the corporate and individual sector. There is less revenue. You'll have more welfare down the line, because when the economy slows down and unemployment goes up, you'll see a whole lot of people going back to welfare again.

You folks know you've got a revenue problem, so you have delayed announcing what the operating funds are for boards of education. Cities have not been able to put out their budgets because you haven't announced what the education rates are going to be, because you don't really know what you can give. You don't have a sense of that. You are in such disarray that you people are holding back as long as you can to get a fairer sense of what it is you can afford to give out. And my sense is that it's not a whole lot, because once the income tax cuts go out, you've got little else to spread around.

That's why my prediction is that you will not give much to the college and university system, because you haven't got a whole lot to give. That's why I often say that when you had good economic times, you could have helped the college and university system. Through your imaginings, you invent such figures about what it is you're doing for the post-secondary education system and those students. You invent things. Out of the blue you say, "We're doing this, we're doing that," and when we come forward with different kinds of statistical information, you simply pretend you don't hear it.

You know and the public knows that tuition fees have gone up 60% in the regular general study field. That's a whole lot of money. They've more than doubled since New Democrats were in, during a recession. Rates have doubled while you've had a good economy for five years.

**Mr Kormos:** Six.

**Mr Marchese:** Now six years. Students are paying more in tuition fees than we've ever seen before—a 60% increase in tuition. How do you explain that, when you've had so much money coming into your government coffers? What the heck are you people doing with our money? That's the question taxpayers are asking: "Where is our money going?" It's certainly not going to



the post-secondary education system, because tuition fees are going up. And do you know why they're going up? Because governments are funding our post-secondary institutions less today than we did prior to 1995. Tuitions are skyrocketing. In some of the deregulated programs, such as medicine, tuition fees have gone up by a staggering 500%. In many of these deregulated programs, tuition fees have skyrocketed to a point of 500% or more. How do you people defend that? I don't know how you defend it. Quite frankly, I'm flabbergasted at the arguments you use to defend such a thing.

We know from Statistics Canada information, the study they have done, that students from lower-income families are choosing not to go to university—but choosing on the basis that they can't afford it. That means access is being restricted to the people who need it most to be able to break the cycle they might find themselves in.

1600

If university—and education in general—is supposed to be the great equalizer and we are cutting off access, it means we are not equalizing opportunities for those who come from lower-income families versus those who come from high-income families. We're not equalizing opportunities at all. You people are restricting access, and your fine statement about "Anyone who has any kind of financial needs need not worry. We will guarantee them access"—ha.

The fact of the matter is that middle-class students, many of them, are not eligible for loans, and those who might be receive such low levels relative to the high increases in tuition fees that they can't afford to pay the kinds of increases you people have levied against them. They can't afford it. So even those who might be entitled to a loan are going to be stuck with tremendous debt burdens that they may not be able to pay very easily once they graduate from who knows what programs.

Statistics Canada information reveals fewer students from lower-income families are getting to university and the college system, which ought to be telling you that we have a problem. Education is not equalizing our opportunities, and I've often argued that. Yes, it ought to be the great equalizer, but it never is or is not the way it ought to be. That's why New Democrats argue that we need to look at our primary grades, our young years, where we can equalize the opportunities for young people in a way that nothing else can. Those early years are so critical to shaping better minds, which are better equipped to cope with an educational system once they come in to a JK, with you people, now half a day; and SK, with you folks—well, in some cases a full day and in some cases not. But if you equalize the opportunities in those early years from ages two to five, yes, you are equalizing opportunities for students. That's where education can be the great equalizer, and that's what you people should commit yourselves to. New Democrats are committed to that.

But at the moment your underfunding of our system is making it harder and harder to give the kind of equality

to students that is desperately needed. So the well-to-do will do fine and those who are not well-to-do will not do as well as they ought to be doing. We have argued that you have cut \$2 billion cumulatively in funding to community colleges and the university sector in the last five years—\$2 billion less cumulatively than ever before. How do you justify that in a good economy? The point is, you won't be able to correct it as the economy begins to slip, and you know that it's slipping. The Minister of Finance knows that it's slipping. That's why he is not announcing the grant funding to our boards of education, because he doesn't know. He doesn't know what the revenues are going to be for the next little while so he's holding back, he's waiting as long as he possibly can to get a grip on what he's got and recklessly saying, "We're going to continue with our income tax cuts to the private sector and to individuals, no matter what." Recklessly, I say; with wild abandon they do such things. And our systems are suffering.

Everyone is saying to us that at the rate this society is changing, with e-commerce in full swing, we needed an educated workforce to be able to deal with the kinds of changes that are fast approaching all of us in society. Yet we are spending less. We're number 10. We are spending less than most jurisdictions in North America, while at the same time everyone is acknowledging that we need to be able to invest in research and to invest in human resources, human capital, because that's what's going to give us the competitive edge. People give us the competitive edge. Investing in people will give us the kind of edge we're looking for. Yet we are number 10 in these areas, in these rankings, where it most counts. How do you explain that? How can you be competitive when you are underinvesting in the sector that you need to invest in? I don't know how you do it.

Your loans are not keeping up with the kinds of increases that people are facing. Many of them still have to pay for rent and food and loans that are beyond their ability to pay. They're not keeping up and all the studies reveal that we've got a big problem on our hands. But you pretend that nothing is happening. You pretend and you invent figures that say, "No, we're investing more than ever before."

Good citizens of Ontario, we're going to have 90,000 more students in the next eight or nine years; 90,000 more students. How is this government going to accommodate these students when they are not investing enough to be able to build to accommodate these 90,000 more students? They say that their funding is going to accommodate them, but universities and colleges know it's not sufficient. They say they have a plan, but we don't know what this plan is, other than the fact that they've got a plan to accommodate 90,000 students. Do you know how many 90,000 students are? They are a lot. And they cannot be accommodated at the rate at which you people are investing in capital expenditures.

This plan obviously is in your own imagination. It is a mythology you are building within your little heads trying to convince the taxpayers of Ontario that you

people know what you're doing. Yet universities have been telling you, "We have a serious problem on our hands," and you just say, "Not to worry, good taxpayers, we're in control." They're worried. The Ipsos-Reid polling reveals 70% of them are profoundly worried about students' ability to get into university, or college, for that matter—profoundly worried.

We have a need in the next five, six, seven years to hire 15,000 more professors. Is this government dealing with the fact that we have a shortage of university professors? When are we going to deal with it? Where is this plan that ought to be in place at the moment to deal with the shortage of university professors? They are retiring in the next couple of years at a rate that we are unable to accommodate that problem. But the Tories say, "Don't worry, we've got a plan." The plan ought to be in place now, because we know that we have a problem on our hands.

The double cohort is part of that additional 90,000 students we're going to be getting in the next seven, eight years, but the double cohort comes in 2003. How are you people dealing with the fact that when the grade 13s and the grade 12s meet, which is in a couple of years, we're going to have an abundance of students trying to get into our university system? You don't have the capacity to get them into the universities, except for your promises, "Don't worry, taxpayers, they will fit in somewhere."

We have an incredibly high ratio of students to professors, yet this government tells you not to worry, "We will accommodate them." Taxpayers, who do you believe? I know that I believe you more than I believe this government, and I know that you believe me more because of the polling that was just released today that says you don't trust this government, and neither do I.

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** Oh no, you do. Say it isn't so.

**Mr Marchese:** Mais oui, former monsieur le ministre. Sit down and join us. Don't go away. Please join us. Participate in this debate. He's leaving, because he knows the truth. He knows that Ipsos-Reid isn't just another polling firm that you can't trust. These folks can be trusted, right? There are some firms where the polling may or may not be as trustworthy. But they all say, "Give or take, folks, one way or the other." They'll normally say that. I believe these folks.

It isn't just a worry of mine as a parent of three children, one of whom is already in university, the other I hope will attend university, and the third in a couple of years. I am profoundly worried, and I often say that if I am worried, as a parent who earns 80,000 bucks, imagine those other middle-class parents who earn less than I do. I am worried for my children and I am worried for some of your children as well. Because while you pretend you are worried I don't see an action plan that says, "We have a plan that's going to address all of these concerns."

1610

Students are paying more now to fund their own education than ever before. The Tories used to say that 25% of operating dollars for universities ought to be paid

by students. That threshold under the Tories then moved to 30%, and that threshold is moving higher and higher every year. The minister says, "Don't worry, we put a cap on tuition fees of 2%." Ha, as if 60% wasn't enough, as if 60% was just a small figure, she tries to convince you, taxpayer, that the additional 2% for the next three or four years is not a problem, that it should be manageable by students.

More and more of our education at the post-secondary level is being paid by you, students, and by you, good taxpayers, indirectly. So you're getting a tax cut. That tax cut you got, whether you're earning \$60,000 or less or even \$70,000 or less, isn't paying for the tuition increases that we've witnessed under this government. That's the question for you, taxpayer, because while you love to get that money in your pocket, you say, and while the former finance minister, M. Eves, says, "This ain't our money, this is the taxpayers' money," OK, now you've got that taxpayers' money back, is it paying for the tuition increases we have witnessed and suffered under in the last six years? It's not. You know that. You know that it could never make up for those kinds of increases. I'm just talking about post-secondary education.

This government loves to talk about the fact, "Oh, the tax cut is what will create a recession-proof economy." The Premier argued that. They argue that with that additional money you got in your pockets as the result of the tax cut, well, it's keeping the economy growing unlike you've ever seen before. But you know, taxpayers, two things are happening: one, the gap between those who earn a lot and those who are earning less is increasing, and you also know that that tax cut you got is not paying for fundamental issues like post-secondary education. You know that.

You also know that you are not sharing in the wealth, that in the last five or six years a whole lot of people, yes, in the e-commerce economy, are earning or have earned a whole lot of money. Harris says, "We have growth that we haven't seen in a long time—yes, thanks to us, and thanks to the tax cut." And you're saying, good taxpayer out there, "Gee, I haven't seen this kind of growth in my pockets. Good God, something is happening." The middle class is disappearing under your fine tutelage, because under the federal Liberals and the provincial Conservatives the gap between those who are earning a lot of money and those who are earning less is increasing. What does it tell you, John? It's telling you that in between, people are being squeezed downwards, and the taxpayers know that.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** You must be an interplanetary space traveller.

**Mr Marchese:** No, member from Etobicoke North, I don't travel in space, because I'm the kind of guy who likes his feet firmly on the ground, I do. I know the Tories have flights of fancy. But me, I'm the kind of guy who loves Mother Earth. I just like to stay close to it; going up there and going down there are two things I'd rather not do, because it scares me. That's why I speak to you taxpayers as someone firmly rooted on Mother Earth



as a way of suggesting to you that you people haven't seen the kind of wealth that the Tories are saying is out there. You're scratching your head, saying, "Gee, I want some of that wealth. I want it in my pocket, and it ought not to be because of the tax cuts that are draining our revenues; it ought to be because I'm getting well paid and I'm maintaining my status as a Canadian who says, 'By working hard I'm going to be up here.' A whole lot of non Canadians are working hard and they're saying, "I'm not here any more; I am gradually slipping down that ladder."

**Mr Hastings:** Where are you?

**Mr Marchese:** Me? Me and you, John, member for Etobicoke North, we are the top 10 percentile.

**Mr Hastings:** No, we're not.

**Mr Marchese:** We're the top 10. With our salaries we're up here. I can't even afford to pay tuition for my daughter and I'm up here, the top 10% of income earners. I don't know how you people are doing it, but maybe some of you have deeper pockets than New Democrats do; I suspect that's the case. That's why New Democrats argue for a system that's accessible, because I am one who believes that hard-working people who earn \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000, \$60,000, \$70,000 are not getting the break that they need, and it's all happening under your careful watch. They're not getting the support that they need.

I know, John, you're bored, because you like to have those kinds of fundraisers that reach out to those people who can afford to dish out \$600 to come and listen to M. Harris, the Premier. That's the kind of crowd you guys like.

**Mr Hastings:** You don't like Frank Stronach.

**Mr Marchese:** No, I have nothing against some of these wealthy individuals. Stronach? I don't know him, but he earns \$40 million a year. God bless his little soul—\$40 million a year. That kind of guy probably buys a whole table to listen to the wonders of Mike Harris's announcements. With \$40 million, \$500, \$600, \$700 a pop is not a big deal for him. But for those hard-working families, I tell you, they can never make it to hear Mike. They could never go to a fundraiser and say to Mike, "I've got a few concerns I want to share with you." They'll never get there.

I am speaking to so many concerns that the public have that we need to address. If we don't address it the problem will get worse. One of the things that you people proposed was the privatization of post-secondary education. You put that out as one of the solutions to deal with the issue of the double cohort, with the issue of the increased number of students we will have in the next five, six, seven, eight years. You did. I remember the parliamentary assistant saying, "No, that's not true, the minister didn't say that," but, yes, it is; the minister did say that on a number of occasions.

I often argue, how can a private university help those students who are crying out for support? How does it help those parents who are crying out to you, as the government, for help? How does a private system, where

tuition fees might be \$20,000 a year, or what a year? Maybe \$10,000, \$8,000? It's in that vicinity: \$8,000, \$9,000, \$10,000. How does that help a working-class kid who can't even pay the kind of tuition fees he's got to pay now? That young man or woman who is in a family whose income is \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000, \$60,000, \$70,000 will never get into that private university.

You have built an institution entirely devoted to the wealthy, maybe Stronach types. How is that going to help, qualitatively, me, my children or the children of the hard-working people in Ontario? It isn't. How many students can this private university absorb to deal with the enrolment increase that we're facing in the next five, six, seven years? It doesn't. It's but a pittance. I'm not sure; it might accommodate let's just say 1,000. I'm not sure what you or the minister has suggested might be the attendance or the participation in such a private university, but let's just say 1,000. How will that ever help to deal with the 90,000 more students we're going to get in the next eight years? It just doesn't deal with it at all, except what you have done is give choice to the very wealthy to be able to go to their own private little club. It's a club of the well-to-do, that's what it is. Those people who come from a certain class will be able to continue to see each other from a private high school into the university system so they can continue their class connections to each other because people who have high incomes love to stay together. It's a way of perpetuating their own class, so as not to mix with the rabble out there because that would be so unacceptable to them, so that their class system won't be tainted by all these possibly working-class kids that might go to the same university. That's what this is about. It's about creating a little club for the rich and it doesn't deal with issues of access in the way that we are talking and in the way that people fear.

1620

We also are putting the entire public system in jeopardy by opening it to the market. That is an argument New Democrats make. According to international trade rules, once a service is open to the market it can't be taken back, and once American private, for-profit operators start to set up shop in Ontario, the government may have either to stop supporting public institutions or start subsidizing for-profit outfits. That's the fear we have. That's the big, big fear. It ought to be something you're concerned about, yet you fine people are oblivious to that kind of circumstance, to that kind of consequence. You're not even considering it.

In fact, you may have been considering it because we've asked for that information to be released and you folks have put roadblocks in front of that request from day one. I suspect what we might find is that there is a real danger and a real risk that once you open this sector up to the for-profit university sector it has implications that will be disastrous for public policy in this province. You're giving away your own power. You're giving away control. You're giving away something that ought to be a concern of government so we don't give away to

the private sector, which is there for profit, more than they want and more than they ever need.

We want public institutions that are well-funded so that everyone benefits, not certain sheltered, privileged, special friends of yours. We've asked the government to release this study they have commissioned on the implications of what it means to fund for-profit operators in this province. We are sufficiently concerned that we have raised it as an issue.

So how does this government deal with the problem of access, with the problem of accommodating 90,000 students? They have decided that with this looming crisis we will privatize post-secondary education and we generally will promote privatization and the corporatization of this sector. We're getting more and more private sector involvement at the university level than we've ever seen. In fact, this government is proud of saying, "We don't mind the private sector coming into our university system. We don't mind it at all. We're not afraid of the competition from the private sector; in fact, we love it. We're not afraid if the private sector invests millions and millions of dollars in the university or college system because if they want to give \$20 million or \$10 million for a proposed program, it's not a big deal."

I tell you it is. Corporations don't invest in the private sector because they are good, humane corporate citizens. They invest because there is something in it for them. Corporate involvement is there for one purpose alone: to influence their specific corporate agenda. If it's a drug company, they want to make sure that they influence public policy as it relates to drugs and what is tested and what is put out on the market and what is not, what we publish and what we will not publish. You understand that, Speaker. They are there for one reason alone: to direct public policy—not to be neutral or to be out of their involvement with the institution; they are there to influence it. That's why they are giving money. You people ought to be worried about it. Students are profoundly worried about it and certainly Marchese is profoundly worried about that.

Classrooms bear the biggest brunt of the cuts to post-secondary education. That means that the impact of spending reductions is being felt most immediately by Ontario students, who are being hit by a double whammy of higher tuition fees and a poorer learning environment. Nobody seems to worry that class sizes at the post-secondary level are so high that learning is very difficult, that approaching a university with questions is very difficult. There are so many students in these classrooms that the quality of education and the quality of learning are being affected by these policies.

We look at the high school system now and we look at the \$1.5 billion in cuts that you have made. Through Bill 74, you are forcing teachers to teach a higher load, a bigger load than ever before. I pointed out that when teachers are unhappy, you have an environment where learning is difficult, if not impossible. You have an environment where students are not learning what they should.

You create a burden for, as an example, an English teacher who has yet a bigger load to carry, who has a hell of a time assigning papers—essays four pages long, six pages long, 10 pages long—and has to mark so many that when you increase the load to just that English teacher, as an example, you make it harder for them to be able to give out more assignments even if they wanted to, even if they could and even if they had the energy to do it.

When students don't get the opportunity to write papers and to write more than ever before so that through the practice of writing they improve their skills, you have a university sector saying, "These students we are getting can't write." The climate you create, whether it's at the elementary level, the secondary level or the university level, is a critical part of learning.

The reason I bring in the high school sector is to suggest that you have eroded the quality of education in the high schools in ways that you have hurt it. When you compressed the curriculum from five years to four years, you made learning more difficult for a lot more students. While many students coming from a higher-income class of people might be able to cope with it, a whole lot of other people from lower incomes may not.

What have you done as a government to assist them? You've done nothing. They weren't getting the kind of remedial help that is so desperately needed by the students to help them cope with a compressed curriculum. They weren't getting any help at all. In some cases they didn't even have the textbooks to help them out. In most cases they don't even have a librarian to go to, to get assistance, to be able to write a paper. You created a climate where learning is more and more impossible, and that affects how kids learn, it affects the quality of education and it affects who succeeds and who doesn't succeed.

What do you do as a Conservative government? What are the implications of that, I mean? You perpetuate a class system. You perpetuate it in a way that you are not able to have the education system be the great equalizer that it should be.

We have, at the university level, institutions that are falling apart. We have aging buildings that are not being repaired because there is no money to repair them. While you gloat over the fact that you're putting in so much more money than any other previous government, including New Democrats before you, and Liberals before us, while you make that preposterous claim, the buildings are aging and they're not being repaired. Students are learning in an environment which is, dare I say, not very healthy.

1630

I say to Minister Cunningham, release some studies that show that your policies are not affecting lower-income students or working-class students. If you've done your studies, release them. Show them to me so that I could feel a little better. Show them to the public so they could feel that somehow you've got a plan. But without research, all that people can do is worry, and rightfully so.



You would think normally that you would be listening to a public that has these immense concerns, because I've got to tell you, Minister Cunningham, I know that you're doing polling and I know that your Premier does polling on a regular basis; in fact, more polling than we've ever seen before. Even though the Premier claims that you're spending less on polling than any previous government, we know you've got loads and loads of money that you pour into understanding where the public is at. I know that if you're doing this polling you ought to be concerned about what these people are saying: 70% of the public is saying they have serious doubts about young people being able to attend university or college, even if they are qualified. Do you understand what that means, 70%?

I would have understood if it was 30% feeling somewhat concerned or very concerned. I would have understood that you as a government would say, "We've got no problem. We don't have to worry about what the public feels until it gets to a range of 45%, 50%, 55%, 60%." I understand that. But if the range is 70%, as I've indicated in this Ipsos-Reid polling, I would think that you would be aware of it, that you in fact have been doing your own polling and that it shows that is the case, and that when the budget announcement is made on Wednesday, the minister, M. Flaherty, is going to give the \$500 million that has been requested by this report of the Task Force on Investing in Students, entitled *Portals and Pathways*.

It's a report that was commissioned not by me, not by Liberals; it was commissioned by you. Madam Cunningham, it was done by you, not me. These fine people have said you are underinvesting. These fine people have said you've got to put in \$500 million in the next couple of years, because they know you've taken a whole lot of money out. And we can't begin to do the repair unless money is invested once again into the community college and university sector. You've got to listen to these people, especially if you put together such a group. What amazes me is that when you put a group together, you seem to take reports and recommendations that are pleasing to you, but when they are not so pleasant you decide, "We'll just have to wait awhile. No, we're not scrapping the report. We're simply reviewing it and studying it," for months and months and months, and in some cases you just leave it on the shelf. If you like the proposals that are made to you by the various committees that you put together, you take the recommendations and immediately implement them. But if you don't like it you say, "No, we're not scrapping it; we're just considering it, mulling it over."

I'm suggesting to you, Madam Cunningham, that this is one report you've got to mull over very carefully. These people are saying we need an investment which is not equal to what you have taken out, because remember, I have argued and others have argued, well documented, that \$2 billion has been taken out cumulatively over the last five years—\$2 billion. The \$500 million requested only moves the threshold a little bit. It's simply not

sufficient, but it gets us on the way to dealing with an economy out there that is waiting for investments in human beings. We have to invest in human capital more than anything else in order to be competitive with other sectors, with other jurisdictions, be it in Canada, be it in the US. At the rate that you are going, we're not there. So I am waiting with interest to see whether or not the Treasurer is going to invest in post-secondary education.

I was at a meeting a couple of weeks ago in the north end. I found the parents of that meeting, about 300, so very polite I couldn't believe it. We had a ministry spokesperson who was telling us not to worry about the fact that 90,000 students are coming, as enrolments are a preoccupation of all of us. We don't have to worry because the government is taking care of that. I found it so surprising that not one of the parents raised the question of tuition fees. I couldn't believe it.

I was equally surprised that they didn't attack this government on the cutbacks to the sector. All they were worried about was the double cohort, and would the university system accommodate their kids, and they were told not to worry. The recommendation that was made by one or two of those individuals was that we keep an eye on the budget announcement.

I couldn't believe that all 300 of those people didn't say, "We've got to call Minister Young, we've got to call all these ministers in Toronto to remind them that this is a serious concern, and that when the budget announcement is there, we want to make sure the money is put into place," to guarantee that their children will be able to get into university without the worry they have. They were just told, "Keep an eye on the budget announcement." Three hundred capable people who could lobby these guys so effectively wanted to keep the meeting non-political and just wanted information. They were just going to keep an eye on the budget announcement to see whether or not money was going to be put into the private sector.

"Man," I was thinking to myself, "a couple of hundred people calling Stockwell to say to him, 'Minister Stockwell, we got a problemo here. What are you going to do about it?'" I would have loved that. Or 200 people calling Minister Young, saying, "Minister Young"—because many of those people are in his constituency—"we've got a serious concern of access and we want to know what kinds of investments you are going to make to the post-secondary educational system to guarantee that when the double cohort kicks in in a couple of years, my kid, in spite of the fact that he has good marks"—not in spite of—"that he will get in, even with good marks," because they're worried that some of them might not even have high enough marks, beyond 80%, to be able to get in in some of these jurisdictions.

But don't worry, because they can go to other provinces, eh, Minister of Labour, like the nurses. If they don't get a job here and they don't like it here, they can just go to Alberta, I suppose, and get a job there. And if they don't get into this university, our fine institutions, good God, so many other universities across Canada will

take them in. Ha. Yes, access across Canada. "Don't you worry if you can't get into U of T. You can get into some other jurisdiction in Nova Scotia, no problemo."

People are profoundly worried. I urge you, citizens and taxpayers, that if you are worried—you just can't wait for the budget to be announced and hope that somehow that \$500 million is going to be there to begin to manage the damage, you can't—call Stockwell. He's right there, he's directly in front of me. Call him up. Call Minister Young. Go to his office.

Good people, good taxpayers, citizens, you can't just wait for the miracle to happen, because these people—there are no miracles except that tough agenda that says, "We've got to tighten our belts a little more. We had a good economy, we gave you the tax cuts, but now, too bad, so sad, there isn't much money. You've got to tighten your belts. Yes, we had good times, and you weren't able to share in them as well as you might have wanted to, but now we've got to tighten the belts."

You've got to go, you've got to meet with these people in their offices and, with the facts in your hand, sit down with these fine people and say, "How are you going to deal with it?" If Minister Stockwell says, "I'm too busy because I'm the Minister," you've got to go to him and say, "Sorry, you represent me and I want a meeting with you." A whole lot of these people are saying, "We're too busy, sorry; too bad, so sad, we can't see you."

1640

I am saying to you that these politicians are your servants, not the other way around. So you've got to go to Minister Turnbull and sit down with him and say, "What are you going to do to make sure that when the double cohort comes, my kids will get into that university?" He'll have to defend himself. If you're properly armed, you'll be able to say that they have no plan, that the investments are not there, and you will have to lobby—and some of you are strong in your ability to lobby these people. You can't leave it to a few citizens to do the job that is required by the many. You can't.

We require an active citizenry to be able to change the direction of that government. I tell you this government is bad, woefully bad. I can't solve it for you. I can't change these people. You know that. You can. If 70% of you believe that you don't have access and your young people are not going to be able to get to university, that's powerful. If you sit down with any of these people in an organized fashion across Ontario, they will get to their caucus meetings when they have them on Tuesdays and each one will report—because Harris will say, "OK, what's up in your riding? What's up in your riding?"—"We've got a problem from people in the post-secondary education sector who are highly concerned about what's going on and we've got to deal with it." All it takes is 20 or 30 of you in each riding—20 or 30 of you.

Don't send letters, because they won't see them. If you're going to send a letter, make sure it's "private and confidential" so it gets in Stockwell's hands. Otherwise, it goes through the civil service and, by the time Stock-

well gets it, he's out of office. Please, if you're going to write a letter, it's got to say "private and confidential" on that envelope so that the politician will get it, so his political staff will get that envelope and show it to M. Stockwell, the Minister of Labour. That's what you've got to do.

But you need to see them face to face. You can't just send some letter that goes nowhere. You've got to meet with them face to face to be able to deal with the crisis we have in so many sectors, and today we're just dealing with post-secondary education and our college and university system. The crisis is real. I urge you to get involved.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Questions and comments?

**Mr O'Toole:** I always appreciate listening to the member for Trinity-Spadina.

In response to remarks I made last Thursday, May 3, in the House, I want to clear up the record a little bit. I have about 100 e-mails from many upset medical students. Most of what I said during my 10 or 15 minutes was with respect to my own five children, who either have graduated or are still in university, and the undergraduate dilemma for students attending university.

For a few moments I digressed to discussions with respect to medical students. I first want to make it clear that I apologize for misstating, perhaps, as they've suggested, the representation that when they're going to medical school, the four years of medical school has a cost component of about \$30,000 a year. Their tuition, they're telling me, is between \$10,000 and \$15,000, of which the province provides up to \$11,000, of which anything over \$7,000 is forgivable. I equated that to four years of medical school times \$7,000, and that's \$28,000, which in fact is the case. Many have an undergraduate degree with student debt attached to that, which becomes a problem.

But more important is this, on further listening and reading many of these e-mails: they have a residency program, and they work for another four years or more in a residency program making between \$30,000 and \$40,000, with a debt load of about \$100,000 accumulating interest on a line of credit. So they do have a significant debt load.

I think the most important thing I wanted to say was that I appreciate that we need a method of ensuring our medical students stay in Ontario and provide high-quality health care. If we don't find ways and mechanisms, we'll have a problem.

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** I will acknowledge the nobility with which the member for Durham has withdrawn or restated his position. I think that's very legitimate for the medical students, who understand the circumstances more deeply than probably every single one of us in this particular House.

To the member for Trinity-Spadina, I would ask him to stay the course because he's the social justice conscience. He's trying to make sure that with this bill that's being spoken of this afternoon there are wider and deeper



ramifications. The bill, on its own merits, is going to be talking specifically about making sure the loan structure is in place and proper for the students of Ontario, but the consequences of not changing that are going to be very disastrous for our students and it will absolutely ensure our students who are in financial need will not go to college or university.

In terms of the bill itself, I think we need to make sure we stay focused, that at least it has to be done, but the overriding issue that's being talked of today is the fact that there are gaps that have been created. The member spoke quite eloquently about the realities that our students are facing today, who need support, who need understanding and need the money that's necessary for a government to entice our students. We're talking about the future.

I want to expand it even further for the member for Trinity-Spadina because this ties into our health care system. This ties into our social networks. This ties into all of what we hold dear as citizens of Ontario. It's very apropos that he spent his time speaking about the broader issue and I think it's very apropos that if the government was listening, they would agree with him that we look at it in a bigger context than simply changing one set of rules to fit another because the banks have decided to withdraw from providing loans.

**Mr Kormos:** Once again, the member for Trinity-Spadina has hit the nail right on the head because this is all about what's happening to post-secondary education here in Mike Harris's Ontario.

I know the member for Trinity-Spadina. I know his family. I know his 90-year-old mother. She had a grade 1 education back in Italy. His father got to grade 5, not unlike the parents of more than a few people in this assembly and like so many parents of so many children of working-class immigrant families.

The member for Trinity-Spadina understands that he is the first generation in his family who got to go to college and university, just like I am in mine. I know the member's three kids: Stephanie, Vanessa and Michael. My fear for them, knowing those kids, as bright as they are, as capable as they are, is that this government's policies—its defunding of education, its relegation of post-secondary education back to that elite status where it's only for the children of the wealthy—are going to mean that just as the member for Trinity-Spadina and I and so many others were the first generation who, as children of working-class immigrant families got to go to college and university, the young people in today's colleges and universities in Mike Harris's Ontario could well be the last generation who, as but children of working-class and, yes, immigrant families, get to go to college and university. This is the elite Mike Harris's Ontario where only the children of the country club set, the Frank Stronach set, the John Roth set, where only the children of CEOs of the big banks get to proceed to post-secondary education. New Democrats aren't going to tolerate that.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I'm certainly interested in the last speaker's comments and also of

course the member for Trinity-Spadina as they talked about being the first generation in their families to go to university. I come from a farm family, and I can say the same thing for myself. At the time I went to university, I can tell you that tuition on a percentage basis was one heck of a lot more than it is today. What better can you invest in than your education? I'm pretty proud of the education I did end up with, but there are many ways of obtaining that.

It was interesting to hear the member for Trinity-Spadina talking about the hard-working people of Ontario. It's so good to hear it coming from that party because when they were in government, they milked the hard-working people of this province with constant tax increases and the end-resulting debt was absolutely terrible. There are just no words that can possibly describe the kind of spending and taxing and borrowing they went through.

He made reference to the enrolment numbers we're facing, the double cohort, but he didn't mention the \$1 billion that's being invested right now in bricks and mortar, in building buildings these students in that double cohort will be able to go to.

**1650**

He talked about giving away control but he didn't talk about accountability: the accountability of the number of graduates getting employment, the accountability of employer satisfaction, the accountability of graduate satisfaction. He didn't talk about the improved repayment of the OSAP loans that has occurred over the last few years with our government.

We can't forget the kind of investment in the future that these students are putting into their own lives, into their own livelihood. What better could you invest in than your own education and your own future?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response, the member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr Marchese:** Thank you, friends and foe alike.

The Ipsos-Reid polling done today said this:

"The results of an Ipsos-Reid poll released today show that two thirds (64%) of Ontarians want increased provincial ... funding for universities and colleges, even though this may result in a cancellation of planned tax cuts or reduced government spending in other areas"—64%. "Increased provincial funding garners the support of voters across all the major political parties who know who they would vote for if an election were held in the province tomorrow. This includes a majority of decided PC voters (53%)."

I urge that 53% of PC voters who believe this, because that's what it says, to call Minister Stockwell. He's my buddy. He's here. He's listening closely to these things.

**Mr Kormos:** What should they call him?

**Mr Marchese:** Because he's not convinced. He thinks it's only New Democrats out there who believe this stuff; 53% of PC voters believe that we need increased funding and they're willing to give up the tax cut.

Citizens of Ontario, I've got to tell you something that I neglected to put in my speech earlier on: New Demo-

crats believe that we should get rid of tuition fees. How do we fund it? We fund it from a progressive income tax system. I say tax the people who are good income earners at the end of the educational process, once they get into the work field and not in the beginning. In the beginning you cut off a whole lot of low-income earners from having access to these programs, but in the end you tax them, if you want to get the money back to fund it in a way that's fair. So I'm saying, as a New Democrat, free tuition fees. You've got no problem with access, and if you need the money later on you take it from those high-income earners who have benefited from a free educational system.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** I am very pleased to rise and address the House in support of this legislation which I believe will make it easier for students to access financial aid and pursue post-secondary education in this province.

I am encouraged by the support of some of my colleagues on the other side who have recognized that harmonizing federal and provincial student loan programs will bring some benefit for students and taxpayers. I accept that some of my colleagues may have concerns in other areas of Ontario's post-secondary education system. I hope that we'll be able to address some of these concerns as we proceed with debate today.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The Minister of Labour isn't in his seat. Stop the clock. If you want to carry conversations across the floor, it's most distracting, so take it outside.

The member for Kitchener-Centre.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Thank you, Speaker. I really appreciate your intervention there because I think the Minister of Labour and the member from Niagara Centre and the member from Trinity-Spadina should be paying attention.

Our government's commitment to accessible post-secondary education in Ontario I think was clearly spelled out in our Blueprint, which was the election platform. It was spelled out on page 45. It states, "...every willing and qualified Ontario student will continue to be able to attend college or university."

I know each of you will remember the Blueprint. I'm sure you've all read through it. I know that in my riding every household received one, so my constituents certainly know what it says too.

The legislation we are debating today is an important part of our work to fulfill the promise that was contained in the Blueprint. It does so because it makes it easier for students to access, receive and repay student loans. This makes it a good piece of legislation, but it is only a part of this government's efforts to ensure that university and college education is accessible for all Ontario students.

As my colleagues and I on this side of the House will demonstrate, it is part of a broader effort involving increased public investments, involving greater accountability and involving improved collaboration with educators and private sector partners to ensure accessibility.

I would like to begin by reminding the House of why this agreement is necessary. I'm sure you will all recall that the Ontario government signed an agreement in May 1999 with Ottawa, with the federal government, to move forward with the harmonization of federal and provincial student loan programs. We entered into this agreement to improve services for students, reduce the number of defaults and increase accountability in the administration of student loans. While all provinces outside of Quebec will need to make arrangements for this change, Ontario will be only the second jurisdiction to realize a harmonized loan arrangement with the federal government.

Some members of the Liberal Party have made accusations that our government has not moved quickly enough. I'm happy to point out that Ontario has been a leader in taking advantage of student loan harmonization with the federal government. I repeat: we are the second jurisdiction to come to an agreement with the federal government. Since the agreement was signed, however, the national banks have determined that they are no longer willing to be involved in the delivery of student loans. As a result of that decision, jurisdictions across Canada must establish alternative ways to ensure that students continue to receive the assistance they need in order to pursue their goals in post-secondary education. Clearly, Ontario must do so if we are to ensure that students have the necessary funding to complete their studies.

Last year, more than 170,000 Ontario students received help from the Ontario student assistance program, OSAP. We must ensure that these funds remain available to those who need them. The federal government has passed legislation that gives it the authority to introduce a direct loan program for the Canada student loan portion of student assistance. That program will be delivered by independent service providers under contract to the federal government. There are provisions in the contract for the provinces to use the same service providers.

The legislation we are discussing here today would, if passed by the Legislature, provide the Ontario government with the authority it needs to implement its agreement with the federal government for joint administration of the Canada and Ontario student loan programs. This means better service for students. For example, student loan certificates will be provided through financial aid offices in colleges and universities. As is the case today with Canada student loans, students would be able to take the loan certificates to a student loan kiosk on campus or to a Canada Post outlet. Funds would then be deposited directly to the students' bank accounts. Under our harmonization agreement, students who need help repaying their loans will be eligible for up to 30 months of interest relief, an improvement over the current 18-month period.

Another example of enhanced service is that borrowers will be contacted by the service providers at least twice a year to give them information about repayment or changes to the plan and to allow borrowers to update their information, such as addresses, phone numbers and the like. This is a higher standard of service than is



currently in place for students or for anyone else and will help everyone—students, government and service providers—to improve the efficiency and administration of Ontario student loans.

1700

It deserves mention that this government has put in place a number of student assistance programs that help students in financial need access post-secondary education. For example, we established the Ontario student opportunity trust fund program whereby the province matched contributions from institutions and private partners to establish endowment funds at Ontario post-secondary institutions. Seventeen universities and 25 colleges have already participated in this initiative, and the result has been the creation of permanent trust funds with a total value of \$600 million. These funds will provide assistance for up to 185,000 students over the next 10 years, and more in the years ahead.

Our government introduced annual student grants to reduce student debt. The Ontario student opportunity grant program forgives student loan debt that runs to over \$7,000 per year of study, and unlike the previous government's arrangement, we ensured that these funds are paid to students annually instead of at graduation. Approximately 39,800 students benefited from grants last year in our province. Ontario student opportunity grants are an important part of our government's continuing work to reduce student debt.

In those instances in which institutions have elected to raise tuition fees, our government has insisted that 30% of revenues from increased tuition be dedicated to help students in need. Last year alone, 92,000 Ontario students received assistance from tuition set-asides in the form of bursaries, scholarships, work-study and summer jobs. This initiative alone represents an anticipated \$125.3 million of financial help for students in 2000-01, and it will give institutions the flexibility to meet the particular needs of their students.

The Ontario government also offers scholarships directly to students to recognize excellence and to assist with the cost of post-secondary education. For students leaving secondary school for their first year of study, we have introduced the Aiming for the Top scholarship program. This program recognizes secondary school students with high marks as well as financial need. Winners of Aiming for the Top tuition scholarships can receive up to a maximum of \$3,500 per year toward post-secondary tuition. Students who maintain an 80% average can continue to receive these tuition scholarships for up to four years. To ensure that Aiming for the Top winners receive the full benefit of their scholarships, the government also increased the amount of scholarship money students can earn before their Ontario student assistance program assistance is affected. More than 4,000 scholarships were awarded last fall. When fully implemented, \$35 million annually will be invested in these scholarships to recognize academic excellence and financial need.

Funding for the Ontario work-study plan has been doubled. This will assist twice as many deserving stu-

dents complete their studies. In partnership with institutions, these funds support jobs for students that do not replace existing positions, are situated on or near campus and accommodate students' academic schedules. Ontario is increasing its support for this program, from \$5.4 million to \$10.8 million annually. As a result, the number of students participating in the program will increase from 3,500 to over 7,000 students. Work-study is another example of an innovative partnership that is allowing students to earn money without compromising their studies and to make a positive contribution to their college or university community.

Our government is committed to helping students at all levels of post-secondary study. Through the Ontario graduate scholarships and Ontario graduate scholarships in science and technology, we are encouraging our best students to study in Ontario and pursue the leading-edge research and study that are increasingly important in our province's prosperity.

Ontario graduate scholarships in science and technology assist up to 500 students per year, in addition to the 1,300 students assisted through the Ontario graduate scholarships program. In 2001-02, the number of Ontario graduate scholarships awarded to students annually will increase from 1,300 to 2,000, and their value will increase from approximately \$11,800 to \$15,000 for three terms of study. All of these initiatives increase the amount of money available to students and increase the number of students who will have access to it.

We have also taken steps to enhance operating funding to ensure spaces for students. Our government allocated over \$28 million to help colleges and universities accommodate more students in 2000-01.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I hear the comments across the floor from the Liberal benches. They don't think it's enough. We're talking millions upon millions of dollars. Everything that I have discussed here, we're talking millions and millions of dollars, leading up to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Of the \$28 million allocated to the colleges and universities, \$3.75 million went to create 500 new spaces in teacher education and \$1 million went to create an additional 40 spaces in medical schools. We also introduced a \$16.5-million accessibility fund to help post-secondary institutions facing increased demand accommodate students in first-year entry programs.

Again I'm hearing the comments, "It's still not enough." Our government has spent more on post-secondary education than any other government in Ontario's history. This year alone, we increased funding by \$103 million, in one year, to support accessibility and high-quality education for students.

Some members on the other side of the House claim that Ontario colleges and universities are underfunded when compared to other Canadian provinces—

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Yes, there they go—yet total operating income at Ontario institutions is \$265 more per

student than the average of the other nine provinces. While funding students is important, ensuring that institutions can meet their share of the cost of education is integral to a successful system of post-secondary education. This government is committed to ensuring that there will be sufficient operating funds to complement record levels of student support.

Last Thursday, concerns were raised by the New Democratic benches about tuition increases. I am pleased to address some of those issues.

Our government has announced a five-year tuition fee policy which permits the lowest fee increases since the late 1970s, including during the NDP and Liberal governments. Institutions are limited to a 2% annual increase in tuition over the average from the previous year and cannot compound year-over-year increases. This policy not only keeps tuition increases low but will also allow parents and students to reliably plan for the cost of post-secondary education. I should also point out that under our government's policy, no institution is required to raise tuition.

Our government has taken effective steps to provide adequate support to universities and colleges, while capping tuition increases at a modest and predictable level. Both of these measures are an important part of our plan to keep post-secondary education accessible to Ontario students.

As I said at the outset, the motivation and academic accomplishments of students should be the important factors in determining who can study at college or university. I am encouraged, and I know that most of my colleagues in this House are encouraged, by the increasing numbers of students seeking college or university education as they are the proof that post-secondary education remains accessible.

1710

By passing this bill, we will be making an important decision. We will be taking an important step to further improve accessibility. The legislation we are discussing today will complement the government's plan to ensure that our post-secondary institutions are ready for the 21st century. What we are talking about today is ensuring that students can afford a post-secondary education because these students are the future of this province. They will make up the skilled workforce that this province needs to attract investment and jobs in the future. They also will turn around and create jobs themselves as a result of the education that we provide them.

Our government is committed to ensuring that all willing and qualified students continue to secure a place in our post-secondary system. This legislation would ensure that Ontario students will continue to have access to the student assistance that they require to help manage their portion of the cost of their education.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** My compliments to the member from the government side—the member for Kitchener Centre—on his wonderful rendition speaking on behalf of the government. The problem is that we

have to deal with the working-class kids who don't have the same chance that the other kids have.

Unfortunately, when the member read from the Common Sense Revolution book, whatever page, whatever promise the government made, it was every Ontarian that qualifies. This is the promise: every Ontarian that qualifies. I wonder, how many working-class kids qualify? They do qualify if they have the money, if they have the possibility. So give them the chance, give them the possibility.

I agree with him that every kid should have equal opportunity, equal rights, but you cannot have that when you continuously have—since 1995, since this government took over—crisis, chaos and cuts, and we told you respectfully. I would perhaps be doing the same speech if I was on the government side, but you know since 1995 we have increased the fees for tuition more than 60%. So when they come today and say, "We will propose the lowest increase—an extra 2% on top of the 60%," with all due respect, this would be an affront to the working-class families' kids who can't afford any more tuition to go to post-secondary education. I think it's up to the government to give them that chance to do that. Now we have deregulated the tuition fees which means we are not increasing anything. Oh sure, but by deregulating the fees, you're letting the colleges and universities charge whatever the heck they want, so working-class families can't afford them.

**Mr Marchese:** Just a couple of things. I think it was the member for Kitchener Centre who talked about the NDP milking working people—I think more or less that expression. Somebody else?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** No, nobody over here said it. We didn't say it.

**Mr Marchese:** But I think you all say that. I just have to tell you, when you increase—

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I didn't say it, but I wish would have.

**Mr Marchese:** OK, let's pretend you said it then. Can you imagine increasing tuition fees by 60%? If that's not milking that poor student, what is? A 60% increase, isn't that milking that poor student who's not even working, or in fact is working part-time to make ends meet? You call that not milking the students? I tell you that's the biggest milking job I have ever seen.

But, taxpayers of Ontario and good citizens, my proposal as a New Democrat is that we have free tuition. If you want to equalize the conditions and the opportunities, make university tuition-free, make colleges tuition-free, and then we'll never have to debate about whether the loans we give are sufficient or not sufficient, whether the grants we give to the really poor students are sufficient or not sufficient. I'm arguing to make tuition free.

And if you want to recover the cost, because it's a cost, after they have graduated from being lawyers or doctors or dentists or whatever it is, if they become our teachers, you then have a progressive income tax system that kicks in, and you get it at the end, not in the



beginning. Because if you get it in the beginning, it means you're shutting out a whole lot of people who want to get to university but find the burden of tuition fees too much. That's why we take that position as New Democrats. Let me know—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** It's a pleasure to join in the debate. My colleague from Kitchener Centre spoke so eloquently. I know the speakers opposite—especially the member from Trinity-Spadina has now spoken for one hour and two minutes. He hasn't said much in the meantime, because he was never to the point.

The debate is about the harmonization of the federal and provincial loan programs. It's such a beautiful program. I know the Liberals are on side with us. I'm sure deep down in their own hearts they are with us because this bill is going to bring in the harmonization. As I said earlier, the banks have pulled out of the arrangement. We have to come up with an arrangement; students have to be looked after, and that is the purpose of this bill.

This bill, if passed, is going to provide students the access: one application, one location where they can go and pick up their money. There is even an arrangement with Canada Post where they can access these funds, even if they don't have access to them right on the campus.

Over and over the question or the concern comes up about the double cohort. Let me reiterate: my own daughter is in that program where she will be graduating and going into university in 2003. The member opposite was quite concerned about the first-generation immigrants, how difficult they might be finding it to send their kids to school. But if you look at the universities' and colleges' composition, the first-generation immigrants are doing all right. Those kids are getting a great education, as are all Ontario kids. The facilities are there, and we are making sure that by investing \$1.8 billion, the double cohort is going to be looked after properly.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** I'm not going to yell at you. Not quite yet. Wait till my 10 minutes comes, and then I'll do some blasting.

In response to the member from Kitchener Centre, I very much enjoy hearing the member from Trinity-Spadina speak and certainly have enjoyed Mr Wettlaufer's comments today. But I think I'd just like to put on the record some information that has just come out in an Ipsos-Reid poll that was released today. It reads, "Ontarians and Access to Post-Secondary Education. Two thirds (64%) of Ontarians, including a majority of decided PC voters (53%) want increased provincial funding for universities and colleges even if it may mean cancelling tax cuts or reduced spending in other areas.

"Seventy per cent (70%) of parents are concerned their kids won't be able to attend university or college even if they are qualified—main reason: they can't afford it (79%), including decided PC voters (78%)."

Two thirds. I think it's very obvious when you listen to what's come out today that there's a lot of concern about what's happening within our post-secondary institutions. I think it's incumbent on all of us as elected officials that—we've got young pages here who are going to be looking for post-secondary opportunities, and we need to make sure that we do everything possible in order to avail them of that opportunity.

I do applaud the initiative of the government today. I know it's not too often that you stand up and say that you are moving in the right direction. I do support that, but I think there are other things you should be looking at within the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, including the budget.

This is a budget that has seen repeated hits by this government since they took office in 1995. This is only one part of a large jigsaw puzzle, and I think a true commitment to funding would be much more appreciated.

1720

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I appreciate the comments by the members from York West, Trinity-Spadina, Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and Elgin-Middlesex-London, but I pay attention to what they say specifically. The member from York West said, "To qualify, they must have the money, and it's up to government to give them a chance." The member from Trinity-Spadina said, "Free tuition is the answer." The member from Elgin-Middlesex-London said, "Affordable tuition is the answer."

What's affordable? What is the Liberal position? Last Thursday, May 3, the member from Eglinton-Lawrence said—

**Interjection:** He's a Liberal.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Yes, he's a Liberal. He said, "Emphatically, we would roll back tuition 10%." Does that mean that the present tuition minus 10% is suddenly affordable? Is that the Liberal position? My, my, my. Rather than just criticize all the time, I wish the Liberals would come up with an actual position. You can't say that present tuition less 10% is necessarily affordable.

What this bill proposes is to give students who are having trouble paying back their loans because of low income or unemployment some assistance. Why is that so necessary? That is because some of the students are not able to get the well-paying jobs and sometimes, just sometimes, there are areas of study that could help them to obtain better-paying jobs at the end. This is something I would encourage students to look at as well, that at the end they know what will produce a well-paying job.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the House this evening about this legislation that's before us. It's Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act. Before the general public gets too excited about what that means, it doesn't mean they're going to fix the problem; it just means they're going to make a little adjustment because the banks aren't going to do what they were going to do.

Let's make sure—before I finish that sentence, I forgot to mention that I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London.

I want to quote from the explanatory note, to make sure that the public understand the very precise language that's being used here. "The bill will allow the Minister of Finance to assign, transfer or sell student loans." And it will "permit the Lieutenant Governor in Council to further prescribe terms of agreements regarding student loans and the assignment, transfer or sale of student loans." It's a pretty open-ended statement that allows them to do pretty well everything they can.

Here's a buzzword for you, contrary to what—some of the people on the other side want to make it sound as if they want to be totally responsible. Listen carefully. It's called privatization. That door is now going to be open, with the language that's being used here. They're going to go to the private sector to possibly give out the money. Is that such a bad idea? Maybe, maybe not, but it's going to have to be for the public to decide what's going to happen as a result of this particular language not covering off how precisely those students are going to have to start paying those loans back.

Further, I want to give a little bit of a backgrounder to make sure people understand what we're getting into. At present there are two government loan programs, the Canada loans and Ontario student loans. The student makes one application to OSAP, which is the Ontario student assistance program. A determination of this funding is based on the student's needs and financial resources.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities houses the OSAP program and receives the fee from the federal government to assess students' needs and authorize loans under the Canada student loan program.

It is a little bit on the complicated side and therefore I'm going to say this and say it once: the government's got the right idea. They're moving down the road to make sure that it's one-stop shopping. That's supportable.

When a student completes or withdraws from their studies, they must begin to repay their loan. Banks have withdrawn from the federal student loan program and are now withdrawing from the provincial side of that loan program. That's the reason they're in this discussion and that's the reason they're proposing the bill. Forget all of the other stuff that's being talked about. For this particular bill at this particular time, it's to take the place of a program that's not going to be offered by the banks. So they've got to pick up the ball and run with it.

The issue is that the banks are withdrawing and the province needs to find another way to provide loans to students. The Ontario-Canada agreement on the harmonization of the federal and provincial student loans program, which is the short term for the bill, has resulted in an agreement to create a single student loan and streamline loan administration. The proposed legislation is amending the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and permitting the "Minister of Training,

Colleges and Universities to make direct loans to students of post-secondary institutions to enter into agreements regarding student loan arrangements." The Minister of Finance is able to "assign, transfer or sell student loans" to third parties.

Overall, this is a good and necessary part of the legislation. There is a need to streamline the student loan program. However, let's talk about what the government should be doing. They should be focusing on reducing student debt loads rather than making it easier for students to accrue debt, and in terms of that it simply means that if they were to take the time to make sure student debt load was brought down, then they would not have to worry too much about the indebtedness of that student once they leave university. This legislation does nothing to provide the interest to relieve that student loan at all. Let's not get into this idea of, "We're providing all this money. We're giving everybody all this money. It's all available"—yet you saw that happen to the farmers in the past, where the banks walked up to them and said, "Borrow the money. Borrow the money. Borrow the money." The farmers went into indebtedness that they couldn't cope with any more and all of a sudden the banks started calling them back in again when times got rough.

I'm saying the government should be more responsible, by reducing this debt load for the students, as opposed to just making it easier to grab a lot more money to go into debt.

University tuition fees are 45% higher than they were in 1995-96. University tuition fees now make up 40% of university operating funds, which basically says tuition fees have continued to rise. The member on the other side was mocking a 10% reduction. We're offering something to reduce that debt load and this government is saying, "But it's OK to continue to put that up higher," and then they're saying there's a cap, but it's a cap of 2% that continues rising. It doesn't say anything about reducing that student debt.

It's unfortunate that the government doesn't understand that the people in these polls are trying to tell you, "That's enough. We've had it. Stop, please. You're scaring us. You're making us realize that we're going to start mocking the United States, where people have to start selling their houses in order to send their kids to school." Would you just take the message from your own party members? Fifty-three per cent of your own party members are saying to you very clearly, "Would you please stop it? Would you knock it off, please? Would you please reduce that opportunity for us to go into debt? Would you do us a big favour here? Would you stop the tax cuts just for a moment so that we can catch our breath and make sure our kids can go to school?"

That's what it says in the polls. What are you afraid of? You're afraid of your own party now? Your ideology has driven you to the point where you're not even listening to your own people. The Statistics Canada report shows that there's a growing gap between the participation rates—



*Interjection.*

**Mr Levac:** Listen carefully—the participation rates of students of higher-income families and students in lower-income families. This was denied by the minister the other day, when she basically said, “Our people are getting richer.” But the mean is rising, and that means that you have to be richer to send your kids to school. She wants to deny and say that Statistics Canada is wrong. So everybody else is wrong except for this particular minister and these people around here, because 53% of their own people are telling them it’s time to stop this.

The Ipsos-Reid poll has been very clear. It has been outlined a few times today. Two thirds of Ontarians are basically saying to this government, “Put the brakes on, please. Would you please slow down?” They’re not listening.

I want to make sure the member from Kitchener Centre hears this, because he’s the one who brought up skills development. I want to make a few points here for my own constituents. I’m dealing with some of these issues on my own in my riding from people who are stuck with this OSAP problem. The member from Kitchener Centre said something to the effect of, “We’re going to try to make it easier for students who want to do skills development.” Maybe he can explain it to me. Maybe he can work with me to talk to the minister about making a change in a very large problem that’s being created.

Students who want to take what’s called a “quick start” program at Mohawk College in my riding for various skilled trades don’t qualify for OSAP. This is diminishing the ability of those students to enter the skilled trades immediately. Twenty-four weeks after the training they can get into the skills development programs, yet they don’t qualify for assistance from OSAP.

1730

Let’s remove that barrier so that my constituents and many others across the province can enter into a program and get out with skills development, because the businesses that are talking to this government are saying very clearly to you, and they’re saying it loudly, “Get on with developing skilled trades so that those students can come in and we can hire them from Ontario and from Canada.”

A case of mine involved a father who received a retirement gratuity and put it immediately into an RRSP for future years, which is what you’re supposed to do. The government penalized him because, it says, it’s income. So now he doesn’t qualify to assist his child to go to university because that was counted as part of his income and he didn’t qualify for OSAP. So there’s another loophole that needs to be corrected.

The government simply hands down defaulted loans to collection agencies, which constantly harass the people in my riding. That’s the fear I brought up originally, when I said this could be handed over to anybody else. The collection agency route is a very difficult one to go down for students, and for parents who are trying to educate their children.

I appreciate my opportunity here and I’m going to turn it over to the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London.

**Mr Peters:** I have a few comments to make regarding the piece of legislation that’s in front of us. Earlier, I certainly expressed support for it because it is a step in the right direction. As I said earlier, though, it’s a small step. It’s only one piece of a jigsaw puzzle, a big piece of a puzzle that the Harris government, when it comes to funding our post-secondary institutions, has thrown away. It’s a sad day to see what has transpired within our post-secondary institutions in this province.

I’m proud to have graduated from the University of Western Ontario, and one of the means I had to attend university, because I wasn’t in a financial position to pay for all the costs myself, was to receive an OSAP loan. That loan helped me to get through my education. It not only helped pay my tuition but it helped to pay for the books—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Peters:** Yes, it is paid back.

It is a sad day too to see the banks abandoning students in this province and across this country. The banks have a role to play and should have a role to play in providing assistance to students for post-secondary education. But I guess there’s not enough money in it for them and they’ve abandoned it. It is a sad day.

We need to look at some of the damage that has been done, and there is a lot of damage that has been done. To the members, if you want to read an interesting speech, it was delivered on February 26 by Charles Baillie, the chairman and CEO of TD Bank Financial Group. It’s a most interesting speech, but one excerpt of it is telling: “At precisely the time when the ‘knowledge-based’ economy is crying out for better-educated workers—people who can think and solve problems—we have seen a shocking decline in education spending. In the US, government spending on public universities in the last two decades increased 20%. In Canada spending has decreased 30%.”

We’ve seen those spending decreases, we’ve witnessed them right here in our own backyards, and the draconian measures the Harris government has put in, all because of the cost of tax cuts for people. We lose sight of this, that Mike Harris puts it in your pocket in one place but it comes out in another place. That’s something we’ve seen that’s very real with university education in this province: on the one hand, government gives money back to you in tax cuts, but they’re taking it away from you as new employees, and new students are taking it away through increased tuition fees. That’s a sad day.

This is a government that first, in 1992, promised that tuition fees should only be allowed to rise, over a four-year period, to 25% of the operating costs of universities. By 1999 the Blueprint considered that 35% of tuition was reasonable and affordable. But now we’ve seen that estimates indicate that students are contributing over 40% through their tuition and university fees. That is all on the backs and that’s the fault of the Mike Harris government, Mike Harris and the individuals who are sitting here

today on the other side. We've seen a \$400-million cut to post-secondary institutions since his government has taken office—\$280 million from universities and \$120 million from colleges. Mike Harris has cut the funding to the point right now where Ontario is dead last out of 10 provinces in per capita funding for universities, and we have the second-highest tuition rates in Canada, only Nova Scotia being higher.

Right now, as we've seen funding cut, we now rank 59th out of 60 jurisdictions in North America in funding that's provided to post-secondary education. There's only one place that ranks lower than Ontario, and that's the home of the great G.W. Bush, Texas. This government loves to follow the track record of Texas, whether it be funding for post-secondary institutions or pollution.

When you look across North America right now, who's the number one polluter? Texas. Who's right behind? Ontario. This government just seems to love the Lone Star State, and where it says, "Don't mess with Texas," this government says, "Don't mess with Ontario." But I can tell you, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party do care about Ontario. We're concerned about the direction this government is taking people in this province, and it's a sad road this government is going down.

You know, I think we need to look at what some university presidents are saying about this government. On March 14, 2000, Robert Prichard, the president of the University of Toronto at the time, said, "Unless the province makes a serious commitment to new funds, for growth and demands for places, it is inevitable that access will be sacrificed and quality will be eroded." Quality being eroded—that's the message being delivered from the University of Toronto president. It's a message that we're hearing from the institutions—colleges and universities—across this province.

That's 2000, but let's look right up to date, at an initiative that was put forth by this government, the Portals and Pathways: A Review of Postsecondary Education, 2001. It's interesting that one of the most interesting findings, and probably the finding of this report that is going to upset the Tories the most, is the strong recommendation for increased funding in post-secondary education.

Assessing the adequacy of government funding did not fall within the mandate of the task force, yet a significant portion of that report, the very report that this government initiated to look at how they're funding post-secondary education, showed some serious problems in this province. Ontario's post-secondary institutions we know are being cost-effective and innovative, efficient and fiscally responsible. However, they're at a crossroads, and the projected revenue gap that's in place threatens the very survival of Ontario's post-secondary institutions. This is a hodgepodge of some of my stuff, some Liberal research and some of your own Tory Blueprint material too, so it's nice to throw a bit back. Sorry I couldn't find any Hansard to throw back at you today.

We're seeing that tuition fees are making up a larger share of the total institutional revenues today than at any other time during the 1990s. Institutions are aging, and deferred maintenance costs stand at \$900 million in the universities and \$300 million in colleges. We could go on and on. I'm going to read into the record again—I think it's important to hear—that the Ipsos-Reid poll said: "Two thirds (64%) of Ontarians, including a majority of decided PC voters (53%), want increased provincial funding for universities and colleges even if it may mean cancelling tax cuts or reduced spending in other areas."

Just don't reduce in agriculture, because certainly I have very strong sympathy for the Minister of Agriculture and the importance that we need to fund agriculture. Seventy per cent of Ontario parents are concerned, 43% are very concerned, that their kids may not be able to attend university or college, even if they are qualified. That's a sad day.

1740

I just want to take this opportunity to raise a local issue. In my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, we had a flight-training school. It was known as St Thomas Aviation Inc; it was a private school. It had an agreement with the provincial government to provide OSAP loans to students. The OSAP loans of the students were assigned to the school. They paid their tuition through OSAP but they didn't receive a diploma. A number of these students didn't receive a diploma because in the fall of 1995 the school closed. They had the seal of approval from the ministry of colleges and training, but the ministry of colleges and training didn't follow through and watch what was going on at this school. My predecessor, Peter North, was dealing with the issue.

**Interjection:** A good member.

**Mr Peters:** A very good member and one of the first independents elected in 60 years. Pete dealt with the issue.

One of the first issues after I was elected in June 1999 was—

**Interjection:** That was a good election.

**Mr Peters:** That was a good election. That was a really good election, that June 1999 election. But since June 1999, four letters have been written to the ministry trying to help out these students, still unanswered by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. We've been told now to go and get an FOI. These are individuals who, by no fault of their own, witnessed their school close. It was a school endorsed by the ministry. But you know what? The school closed, no fault of their own. This government has sent collection agents after these students to collect those fees back. One student we've been dealing with has had two collection agencies harassing him for seven years.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Kormos:** I was listening very carefully to the two members of the Liberal caucus. I happen to like both of those members; I hold them in regard. But I'm amazed that the Liberal caucus stands up and they don't even have 20 minutes' worth of stuff to say on this issue. I



would have thought folks out there would want to hear from the Liberals. So here are two members whom I like a whole lot splitting their time, 10 minutes apiece. Are they going to now accelerate this process? Are they going to support time allocation when the government brings it in? Look, it's one thing to sort of have a little too much and to fall into the Tory bed and end up sleeping with them; it's another thing to crawl in stone-cold sober, fully aware of your bedmate.

I've got folks coming into my constituency office and I'm running into them at Comisso's plaza and up at the Zehrs store. I had a gentleman in, an old friend of mine, a long-time friend; he's in his 80s. Over the course of a hard-working lifetime, he put together \$20,000 or \$30,000 that he's had in the bank and he's been drawing interest on. He said to me, "Peter, look, my grandchildren, I want to help them with their university, because I know their families can't afford it. These kids are going to have to drop out." But I had to have a candid talk with this 80-plus gentleman, who's still in good health but failing strength, about the fact that with his increased property taxes, the increases in natural gas, the increases in electricity, the spikes in electricity costs that Harris and the Tories are going to generate here in the province of Ontario, he may not be able to afford as a senior citizen to express his love for his grandchildren. The fact is that at the end of the day, both of them are going to be screwed: the senior citizen—granddad and grandma—as well as the grandkids.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I'd like to meet that guy. But let's talk quickly; I want to get it on the record. The banks are getting out of the business for one reason: they can't collect the loans. If this is a gold mine, they wouldn't be getting out of it. Obviously, they're not collecting the money. Whether that's good, bad or indifferent, that's an absolute. The capitalists out there in the banking industry are not going to give up a gold mine if they were making money in collecting loans. They're obviously not.

The second thing is, 59th out of 60? Table the report. I've asked you to table it for a year. You won't table that report. Do you know why? Because the report is bogus. We know it's bogus.

*Laughter.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** It is bogus. You won't table it. How many times do I have to ask you to table the report? You keep quoting from it, but nobody can tell me who wrote it. I think Gerard Kennedy wrote it one weekend. The second one is the studies that should be tabled.

I also want to talk about—look, the NDP at least are saying, "Do away with any tuitions." As loopy as they are, OK, they have a position. They're saying, "Abolish all tuitions"—we know that would cost an arm and a leg—in Agenda for People. OK, if you want to try and sing that song again, go ahead. But at least it's a position.

You guys make me laugh, you're such vacillating Liberals. "We are going to reduce tuitions by 10%." They say 60% comes from the school, 40% from the person. You're going to reduce what they pay by 4%, and you're

holding this out as some kind of panacea, some nirvana you've reached that now all of a sudden all these poor working people that you represent, with a 4% reduction in tuition fees, 4% on the total cost of education, are now somehow merrily going to get into schools? Take their position, loopy as it is; they're going to get free education. Your position is just a hair different from ours. Four per cent on a year's tuition means nothing to the people you're speaking about. It makes school no more accessible.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Prince Edward-Hastings.

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** The Minister of Labour is right; there is a major problem facing funding.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think if they're going to respond, it has to be at least one of the two who stood up and spoke.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is questions and comments.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I'm sorry.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thanks for your help.

Reset the clock for two minutes.

**Mr Parsons:** The Minister of Labour is right for once on this. It is a big problem that needs to be addressed. But unfortunately, this government is going in the wrong direction. This bill is fairly innocuous; in fact, we've had far more debate time on it than it merits. It makes it easier for a student to get into debt. That's what it does. But the bigger issue that needs to be addressed is the lack of equity for access to the system. The government has lost touch with the way Ontario lives. For the average working family in Ontario, the costs are now insurmountable. For a student leaving a college or university, it's easy to say the debt is only \$25,000 or \$30,000, but if you're from a family that makes \$20,000 a year, if you're from a family that's on disability allowance, that makes \$10,000 or \$11,000 a year, a debt of \$27,000 is terrifying.

Former Premier of Ontario Bill Davis once said, "It is important that we have quality health care in the province, probably the number one issue, but quality health care comes only if we have a quality education system accessible to everyone. In order to fund quality health care,"—the procedures are getting more expensive—"we need a well-paid workforce. In order to have a well-paid workforce, we need to attract industry. Industry will come to Ontario only if we have a highly skilled workforce." We're going in the other direction. We're losing the ability for people from a working family to go to a post-secondary education.

Most of my experience has been in the college system. It's a long time since I've been involved with universities. But I know at Loyalist College in Belleville, which is typical of all of Ontario, since this government was elected in 1995, their per student funding has gone from \$5,000 to \$3,000 per student. That has put tremendous stress on the system. It has caused this college and other colleges to have to cancel—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Marchese:** I just want to say to the good citizens of Ontario that the New Democrats have a lot to say on this topic and we're going to be debating this issue until we are hoarse and cannot speak any more.

I want to say to my good buddy M. Stockwell—I think you referred to our idea of free tuition as goofy?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Loopy.

**Mr Marchese:** Loopy, which means wacko, that kind of thing?

Good citizens of Ontario, we happen to think it's a good idea. It's a question of values: what do you believe in? We're not talking to each other here in this assembly. I talk to you, those who are watching this particular political forum, and I'm saying to you it's question of what you value. If you're saying that you don't mind paying \$20,000 for tuition fees for your children every year—

**Interjection:** God bless?

1750

**Mr Marchese:** God bless. Exactly. Not every year, but accumulated over a degree program of three or four years, it's \$20,000 or so. If it's not regulated, it's like medicine at \$14,000 a year, \$15,000, depending where you are. That's a lot of money, and I'm saying that a whole lot of young people are never going to make it to university. Do you believe that? If you believe, as I do, that we're shutting out a whole lot of young people because they are saying they can't afford it, then I'm saying to you that as a matter of principle, in terms of things I value, if it's free nobody will be shut out.

So I say to Minister Stockwell, the Minister of Labour, that if you believe, as I do, that it's important that no one is blocked—we say education should be free. How do we get it? Like we get everything else. We pay for our health care system and educational system and social programs out of the taxes that we pay. Now, if you think—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Response?

**Mr Peters:** In response to the member for Niagara Centre, I can assure the honourable member that I will not go to the dark side. I don't want to go over there, and I don't agree with what was said about you being loopy either. I think that's wrong. But I think the member makes a very good point about increased costs, because there are lots of families in this province, grandparents, who want to help out their children but, because Mike Harris is putting it into one pocket and taking it out of the other, parents and grandparents can't help their grandchildren, and that's a good point that was raised.

To the member from Etobicoke Centre, you make me laugh too. I think it's good that we can make each other laugh. I truly mean that you've done a lot of damage to post-secondary institutions in this province. The cuts that have been made, the damage—we're not going to see it. By the time these pages get to post-secondary institutions, they're going to see the true extent of the damage that Mike Harris and your cronies have done.

To my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings, it is a question of equity. I think we've got to ensure that every

individual in this province has access to post-secondary institutions. Look at what has happened just recently at the University of Western Ontario, which has raised its tuition by 40% for medical school. What that is going to do—and I think the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs needs to be concerned about this. There's a study at the University of Western Ontario that's shown that these increased tuition costs are shutting the door to rural individuals. We've all got crises around the province of doctor shortages, but moves like the University of Western Ontario and McMaster and U of T are shutting the door to rural Ontario students attending medical school.

To the member for Trinity-Spadina, it is a question of values. That's what it's all about. I don't agree with the values of this government and the emphasis that they're not putting on students.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Galt:** For the few minutes remaining this afternoon, I'd first just like to reflect on some of the comments.

This big concern about the double cohort and what's going to happen down the road—you know, this all started with the men coming back from the Second World War, and there was more than a double cohort going through at that time; it may have been a triple or a quadruple. I can tell you they went through university. There was very little preparation at the universities for that load that went into them and we had a lot of people come through the universities and colleges at that time who had brilliant careers afterwards. You certainly do not necessarily have to have the perfect conditions, because those people proved it many times over.

I'm very pleased to rise and join my colleagues on both sides of the House in support of the legislation that's before us here today, Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act.

The tuition that an average Ontario students pays covers about one third of the actual cost of their education—just one third. The rest comes from the government, academic institutions and other sources. Basically, two thirds comes from their neighbours, from their families, from their relatives, from their friends. They're the ones who are paying the other two thirds.

I believe that it is indeed important for colleges and universities to be accountable to everyone who helps fund their operations: the students, the government and the private donors. Greater accountability helps students because it provides them with information that is needed to make good decisions.

As several members pointed out during second reading debate, students sometimes enter the wrong program or do not receive the benefits they expected when they graduated. By ensuring that colleges and universities publish important information about the performance of their programs and operations, students will have important tools to ensure that they make the best academic decisions for themselves.



For far too long, students have read the description of a program and thought, "Wouldn't that be interesting to study?" and have headed off without having any idea whether there is a career opportunity at the end or not. They get halfway through their course or degree and then find out that the job prospects are almost minimal. But lo and behold, the community college or university is getting all kinds of money to put on these programs that in the end will probably not create a job or give them that kind of opportunity, dashing the hopes they had for the future and their livelihood.

Transparency and accountability are principles that our government enthusiastically supports and has worked to establish across many sectors. Our government has taken several specific steps to improve accountability in the post-secondary sector and I would like to address some of them here today.

Before I get into some of those, I would like to reflect back on last Thursday and the debate we had here on the resolution brought forward by the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. It was an accountability act on attendance, and when the vote was taken, only 70% of the Liberals were present. I thought that was just a little disturbing. It was an accountability bill and there were

that many absent; an accountability bill brought forward by a Liberal concerned about attendance, and such poor attendance in the Liberal Party at the time that vote was taken. What they should do is set an example.

**Mr O'Toole:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member, Mr Smitherman, isn't here in the House. Isn't that who you're talking about? He's not here.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'm sorry, I didn't hear the member for Durham. Would you repeat what you said?

**Mr O'Toole:** The member for Northumberland should know that the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale is not here and he shouldn't be mentioning that in his remarks.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That's a legitimate point of order. Members cannot mention the absence or attendance of another member at a particular sitting.

**Mr Kormos:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to understand your ruling. Surely the Speaker didn't mean to suggest that I or one of my colleagues couldn't refer to my presence here.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I certainly did.

It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*





**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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<b>Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC)</b>	Nepean-Carleton	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Richesses naturelles
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Bountrogianni, Marie (L)	Hamilton Mountain	
Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Ottawa-Vanier	
Bradley, James J. (L)	St Catharines	
<b>Brown, Michael A. (L)</b>	Algoma-Manitoulin	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Bryant, Michael (L)	St Paul's	
Caplan, David (L)	Don Valley East / -Est	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
<b>Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC)</b>	Oakville	Speaker / Président
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Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Toronto-Danforth	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
<b>Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC)</b>	Stoney Creek	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Cleary, John C. (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	
<b>Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC)</b>	Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC)</b>	Ottawa-Orléans	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Conway, Sean G. (L)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	
Cordiano, Joseph (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	
<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin (L)	Scarborough-Rouge River	

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Dombrowsky, Leona (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	
Duncan, Dwight (L)	Windsor-St Clair	opposition House leader / chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and government House leader / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Éducation et leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)</b>	Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC)</b>	Guelph-Wellington	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
<b>Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)</b>	Whitby-Ajax	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Galt, Doug (PC)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Gerretsen, John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	
Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	
Gill, Raminder (PC)	Bramalea-Gore- Malton-Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	
Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora-Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Parliamentary assistant to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au vice-premier ministre et ministre des Finances
<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John (PC)	Etobicoke North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)</b>	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham-Kent Essex	
<b>Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC)</b>	Erie-Lincoln	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs
<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)</b>	Burlington	Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC)</b>	Huron-Bruce	Minister without Portfolio (Health and Long-Term Care) / ministre sans portefeuille (Santé et Soins de longue durée)
<b>Johnson, Bert (PC)</b>	Perth-Middlesex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Kells, Morley (PC)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Parkdale-High Park	
<b>Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC)</b>	Oak Ridges	Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / -Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / -Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Lankin, Frances (ND)	Beaches-East York	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity-Spadina	
Marland, Margaret (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	
Martel, Shelley (ND)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Martin, Tony</b> (ND)	Sault Ste Marie	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Maves, Bart (PC)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mazzilli, Frank (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs
McGuinty, Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / -Sud	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLeod, Lyn (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough- Aldershot	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Molinari, Tina R. (PC)	Thornhill	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services and Minister responsible for Children / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires et ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Transports
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire au premier ministre
<b>Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan</b> (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Durham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	
Peters, Steve (L)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Phillips, Gerry (L)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Pupatello, Sandra (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b> (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b> (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / -Ouest	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Smitherman, George (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	
<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b> (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles

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<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)</b>	Lanark-Carleton	Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General / adjoint parlementaire au solliciteur général
Tilson, David (PC)	Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général et ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)</b>	Markham	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
<b>Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC)</b>	Don Valley West / -Ouest	Solicitor General / solliciteur général
Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire au président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe-Grey	Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC)</b>	Kitchener-Waterloo	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Wood, Bob (PC)	London West / -Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services correctionnels
<b>Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Vaughan-King-Aurora	



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John Hastings, Shelley Martel, Bart Maves,  
Julia Munro, Richard Patten  
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**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et des projets de loi d'internet privé**

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Gilles Bisson, Garfield Dunlop,  
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Frances Lankin,  
Frank Mazzilli, Ted McMeekin, Bill Murdoch  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.





## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 7 mai 2001

### PREMIÈRE LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur les obligations familiales et l'exécution des arriérés d'aliments,</b> projet de loi 40, <i>M. Wettlaufer</i> Adoptée .....	464
<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur les garderies,</b> projet de loi 41, <i>M. Lalonde</i> Adoptée .....	464
<b>Loi de 2001 sur la préservation, la protection et la promotion de la moraine d'Oak Ridges,</b> projet de loi 42, <i>M. Colle</i> Adoptée .....	464

### DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'harmonisation des prêts d'études de l'Ontario,</b> projet de loi 19, <i>M<sup>me</sup> Cunningham</i> Débat présumé ajourné.....	501
---	-----

# CONTENTS

Monday 7 May 2001

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Rural health services</b>	
Mr Conway .....	461
<b>Correctional facilities</b>	
Mr Dunlop .....	461
<b>Education funding</b>	
Mr Gravelle .....	461
<b>Education Week</b>	
Mr O'Toole .....	462
<b>Hospital restructuring</b>	
Ms Di Cocco .....	462
<b>Labour policy</b>	
Mr Kormos .....	462
<b>Emergency Preparedness Week</b>	
Mr Mazzilli .....	463
<b>Doctor shortage</b>	
Mrs McLeod .....	463
<b>Academic testing</b>	
Mr Arnott .....	463

## FIRST READINGS

<b>Family Responsibility and Support</b>	
<b>Arrears Enforcement Amendment</b>	
<i>Act, 2001, Bill 40, Mr Wettlaufer</i>	
Agreed to .....	464
Mr Wettlaufer .....	464
<b>Day Nurseries Amendment</b>	
<i>Act, 2001, Bill 41, Mr Lalonde</i>	
Agreed to .....	464
Mr Lalonde .....	464
<b>Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation,</b>	
<b>Protection and Promotion Act,</b>	
<i>2001, Bill 42, Mr Colle</i>	
Agreed to .....	464
Mr Colle .....	464

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

<b>Rural economic development</b>	
Mr Coburn .....	465
Mr Peters .....	468
Mr Hampton .....	468
<b>Tourism and trade</b>	
Mr Hudak .....	466
<b>Northern economy</b>	
Mr Newman .....	466
Mr Hampton .....	469
<b>Research and development</b>	
Mr Wilson .....	467
Mr Phillips .....	468
Mr Patten .....	468

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Tuition fees</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	469
Mrs Cunningham .....	469, 475
Mr Marchese .....	475
<b>Northern Ontario heritage fund</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	470
Mr Newman .....	471
<b>Water quality</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	471
Mrs Witmer .....	471, 472, 476
Ms Churley .....	472
Mr Bradley .....	476
<b>Competitive electricity market</b>	
Mr Hampton .....	472
Mr Wilson .....	472, 474
Mr Conway .....	474
<b>Education legislation</b>	
Mr McGuinty .....	473
Mrs Ecker .....	473
<b>Condominium legislation</b>	
Mr Hastings .....	473
Mr Sterling .....	473
<b>Education funding</b>	
Mr Arnott .....	475
Mrs Ecker .....	475
<b>Transportation study</b>	
Mr Maves .....	477
Mr Clark .....	477
<b>Post-secondary education</b>	
Mr Gerretsen .....	477
Mrs Cunningham .....	477
<b>Emergency Preparedness Week</b>	
Mr Galt .....	478
Mr Turnbull .....	478
<b>Police complaints</b>	
Mr Kormos .....	478
Mr Young .....	478

## PETITIONS

<b>Northern health travel grant</b>	
Mr Bartolucci .....	479
<b>Child care</b>	
Ms Martel .....	479
<b>Horse riding safety</b>	
Mrs Molinari .....	480
<b>Services for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Ms Di Cocco .....	480
<b>Brain tumours</b>	
Mr Wood .....	480
<b>Health care</b>	
Mr Levac .....	480

## Protection of minors

Mr Gill .....	480
<b>Environmental protection</b>	
Mr Parsons .....	481
<b>Water quality</b>	
Mr O'Toole .....	481
<b>Safe streets legislation</b>	
Mr Lalonde .....	481
<b>Immigration and refugee policy</b>	
Mr Hastings .....	481
<b>Domestic violence</b>	
Ms Churley .....	482
<b>Poverty</b>	
Mr Sergio .....	482

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Ontario Student Loan Harmonization</b>	
<i>Act, 2001, Bill 19, Mrs Cunningham</i>	
Mr Marchese .....	482, 491, 494, 499
Mr O'Toole .....	490
Mr Levac .....	491, 495
Mr Kormos .....	491, 498
Mr Galt .....	491, 500
Mr Wettlaufer .....	492, 495
Mr Sergio .....	494
Mr Gill .....	495
Mr Peters .....	495, 497, 500
Mr Stockwell .....	499
Mr Parsons .....	499
Debate deemed adjourned .....	501

## OTHER BUSINESS

<b>Wearing of pins</b>	
Mr Levac .....	461
<b>Visitor</b>	
The Speaker .....	464
<b>Hockey game</b>	
Mr Colle .....	469
<b>Legislative pages</b>	
The Speaker .....	479

Continued overleaf



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Révisé



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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**  
Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**  
Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

# **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

**Tuesday 8 May 2001**

**Mardi 8 mai 2001**

**Speaker**  
Honourable Gary Carr

**Président**  
L'honorable Gary Carr

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 8 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 8 mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** Week after week, month after month we've been raising concerns about the inadequacy and unfairness of the northern health travel grant. Let me give one more example of the ways in which the travel grant fails the people who need it.

It happens sometimes that newborn infants have to be airlifted to southern Ontario for emergency care. When this situation arises following a Caesarean section delivery, the mother is not immediately able to travel with the baby. Obviously it's essential that the mother be with that baby as soon as she is well enough to travel. But the northern health travel grant rules say that since technically she's not escorting her infant, she does not qualify for financial support, not even the \$420 maximum that northerners are allowed. So in addition to the stress of a seriously ill new baby, the family has to worry about whether they can afford to get the new mother to Toronto or Hamilton or London to be with her ill child. No wonder people in my part of the province feel that the government simply doesn't care.

Too many people feel the anguish expressed by a constituent of mine who lives in Atikokan and has to travel regularly into Thunder Bay for cancer treatment. She writes, "I am upset because I am a low-income single parent of two children struggling to take care of them the way they deserve, but am forced to go into debt and possibly lose my home in order to continue my treatment. Everything I struggled all these years to accomplish has been taken from me, including a secure future for my children, because I am forced to go into debt to stay alive. Is this fair?"

We ask again, on behalf of our constituents who face enormous personal costs to get the health care they need, is this fair?

#### POVERTY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** The federal government recently released a report, entitled National Child Benefit progress report, 2000, that professes a decrease of child poverty in Canada. The report attributes

this to the success of the national child benefit supplement.

I've read this report and I'm deeply concerned about the federal government's readiness to ignore growing poverty in Ontario and deeper levels of poverty throughout Canada. The report asserts that the national child benefit initiatives are working because child poverty is down. Let me share with you the pertinent facts missing in this report.

Child poverty got worse, not better in many provinces, including Ontario. Poverty grew in the face of economic growth, it grew in the face of job growth, it grew in conjunction with the reduction in welfare rolls and it grew in spite of the national child benefit. Families living in poverty are poorer than ever and they need more help than ever.

Since 1989, Ontario has experienced the biggest increase in the average depth of poverty in Canada. The average poor family would need \$9,832 just to get to the poverty line, and yet Premier Mike Harris is being allowed to take \$100 a month from them through the national child benefit clawback. Why isn't this reflected in the national child benefit report? Crediting the national child benefit with the national decrease in child poverty ignores the shameful fact that one in five children in Canada still lives in poverty. It also ignores the multitude of factors that go into reducing poverty. It's based on faulty logic. Any statistician knows correlation does not equal causation.

#### EVENTS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I rise in the House today to congratulate everyone involved in the second annual RAV ON trade show in Northumberland. RAV ON, which stands for Rural Agri Ventures Ontario, is a unique agri-venture trade show organized by the Campbellford-Seymour Agricultural Society. This showcase took place in Campbellford on April 28 and 29, featuring alternative livestock and crops as well as new ideas for traditional agriculture.

RAV ON was successful in giving everyone involved with a new innovative alternative or diversified agribusiness the opportunity to display their products and ideas. Visitors had the occasion to meet and greet owners of successful agribusinesses and seek advice on how to start up their own agri-ventures.

Some of the alternative agribusinesses featured in this year's showcase included emu, ostrich and buffalo farm-

ing; organic and herbal gardening; and farm vacation operations such as bed-and-breakfasts. Visitors were able to sample and purchase unique agricultural products.

This kind of showcase not only brings our attention to new and innovative ideas in agriculture, it also provides opportunities for these ideas to emerge and develop into new business opportunities. I commend Don Frise and the Campbellford-Seymour Agricultural Society for their hard work and dedication in organizing this trade show.

#### PAT CAREY

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** I rise today to speak briefly of fire captain Pat Carey. He was kindly mentioned last week by my colleague Mike Colle, the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, and I attended his funeral on Saturday on behalf of our caucus and my constituents. Captain Carey died of a heart attack fighting a fire at Dundas Street and Scarlett Road in my riding.

There was considerable public notice taken in the Weston neighbourhood where the funeral was held, and weekend media reported a large contingent of firefighters present. I believe I met Captain Carey picking up food in a food drive a few years ago. I wouldn't want to eulogize him as a person; his stepson Andy did a fine job of that. However, there's a quality of Captain Carey that I believe should be appreciated by this House, and it was only partly available in the news reports. The Pat Carey I believe this House needs to take note of is the public servant. In this House we set the framework for fire, police, education, health care and a range of other activities to serve the public, but we rarely speak of the people we count on to carry them out.

Here was a man a year away from retirement, at age 59, on a dangerous assignment. He was one of the people we pay to head into a fire when the rest of us are going the other way. I suppose the conventional answer is, someone has to do it. But I don't believe we ask ourselves why often enough. Why would someone undertake a difficult job, leave what is otherwise an ordinary life and put themselves on the line?

Captain Carey's life suggests the answer. The only "public" in the public service we in this House can count on is the personal commitment people like Captain Pat Carey put forward to serve others, and we need to never take that for granted.

#### GREAT LAKES PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** On Thursday a couple of weeks ago, I was honoured to be invited to attend the opening of Great Lakes public school in my riding of Brampton Centre. It's the third new school opening I've been fortunate enough to attend since last year, and I want to congratulate all those who played an important part in the construction and opening of the school, including the staff at the Peel board of education, principal Mary Haslett and the wonderful teachers and staff members of Great Lakes public school.

I was there to present greetings from the Premier and the Minister of Education, and also an Ontario flag to the school. But I think one of the most moving elements of the entire ceremony was the procession of children who walked into the school holding 36 flags representing 36 countries. In addition, they gave greetings to everyone in 36 different languages, each from their own home nation. I think this reflects the wonderful diversity, the multicultural elements not only of Brampton but of our terrific province.

Congratulations to all the parents and students who are the heart and soul of our education. My constituents and I are proud to see this newly constructed school open.

1340

#### COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** The Harris government is so out of touch with the doctor shortage in southwestern Ontario that it is, in effect, shutting down an urgently needed radiology clinic in Windsor. It is pushing out a dedicated young radiologist who desperately wants to serve the working families in our area. Why? Because the outdated numbers and bizarre process of the government have deemed that we no longer have a shortage of radiologists.

But I have a letter from the Essex Kent Lambton District Health Council stating that of course we do. I have a letter from the chief of Windsor Regional Hospital stating that they are short eight radiologists. He states that Dr Charles Gervais is one of the few community-based radiologists in Windsor. He says that if Dr Gervais is forced to relocate, it would be a significant loss to the community and would have a detrimental effect on the hospital's diagnostic imaging department. He says the hospital doesn't have the resources to meet the increased demand, and that further delay on this situation will compromise the health care of working families and struggling citizens. I am shocked and appalled at the ineptitude of your government.

On Friday, I sent an open letter with all the details to the minister, demanding an investigation. I urge those watching and the members of the gallery to contact the minister to ask him why he is forcing Dr Gervais out of a community that so desperately needs his services.

#### EDUCATION WEEK

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** I rise today to mark Education Week, which is being celebrated this week.

The theme of this Education Week is "Excellence in school performance, excellence in student learning." That theme accurately summarizes the goals of our government's plan for education quality reform and yesterday's announcement.

I want to applaud the Minister of Education for her announcement, which will provide school boards with greater flexibility and increased resources. I'm also



pleased that recommendations are being accepted from the advisory group on co-instructional activities and our other education partners. Yesterday's announcement is an indication of our government's commitment to quality education and to student achievement.

Our government listened to the concerns of our education partners and responded by proposing an additional \$50 million for school boards and introducing measures that would help ensure that co-instructional activities are available to all our students. I look forward to working with teachers, parents and students in my riding to help implement these initiatives.

To help mark Education Week in my riding of Perth-Middlesex, the Avon Maitland District School Board is hosting its third annual excellence in education awards ceremony tomorrow in Mitchell. I want to extend my congratulations and thanks to all the award recipients for the contribution they make to public education.

Please join me in thanking the teachers, parents and students in Perth-Middlesex and everyone who is working to build a better educational system for our children.

### STATUTORY HOLIDAYS

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** I was reading on the Globe and Mail Web page an article that was just posted by Richard Mackie with respect to a campaign that's underway by the Labatt Brewing Co. It's a petition calling for a new statutory holiday in June for Ontario working families.

The petition reads, "Had enough of the rat race? Tired of pushing paper, answering phones, squeezing into packed subways, sitting in endless traffic, eating at your desk? Make your voice heard." More than 90,000 Ontarians have signed that petition to date.

This morning, they asked the Premier of Ontario what he had to say about the petition. Here's what the Premier said: "We think we have in Ontario the appropriate number of days of rest." Not a surprise that the Premier would say that. "I've not heard any compelling arguments that we need more days," said the Premier.

Isn't that interesting? This House has sat less than other Houses. This Premier has attended, in the past, fewer question periods than others. We're faced with working people looking for more days of rest, and of course the Premier says we have enough days of rest. What else is he going to say? What else will he say?

So we say to working families in Ontario, keep pressing for that. If you really think the Premier has had too many days of rest, sign that petition as a protest of his absence from true accountability in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** It is an honour for me to rise in the House today to express my deepest thanks to all the wonderful volunteers in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka in recognition of

International Year of the Volunteer and pay tribute to the enormous contributions each and every volunteer makes in our community.

I would like to take a moment to inform the House of an extremely successful event that took place in my riding on Tuesday, May 1. I had the opportunity to host the Ontario Volunteer Awards night in Huntsville. I was honoured to be able to thank an outstanding group of volunteers from all over Parry Sound-Muskoka who give so much of their time and energy to make our community a better place to live.

I also attended the West Parry Sound District Museum and the Muskoka Volunteer Network to deliver two community volunteer grants to enable these organizations to host a community volunteer summit and help launch Ontario's Promise for our children.

My constituents in Parry Sound-Muskoka are excellent examples of individuals who make an exceptional contribution to our community. I can't possibly mention all of the groups that donate their time to hospitals, community centres, churches, arts, sports groups and numerous others in such a short period of time. There are just too many to list. However, each and every person who gives their personal time, warmth and kindness enriches the lives others in our province. I think it is very important to recognize the central role these volunteers play in making Ontario a better place.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we continue on, we have with us today in the Speaker's gallery Mr William Bronrott, a member of the Maryland House of Delegates. Please join us in welcoming our special guest.

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to welcome in the members' gallery Mike Bradley, the mayor of the city of Sarnia.

**The Speaker:** I did actually miss that. I was speaking to one of the members, Mr Marchese, whose son is job-shadowing him today and he wanted to let me know that. Of course I can't make an announcement about that, but I'm sure his son is here, just in case people are wondering.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### CITY OF GREATER SUDBURY AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA VILLE DU GRAND SUDBURY

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to amend the City of Greater Sudbury Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la ville du Grand Sudbury.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This will be the first of a series of amendments that I bring in with regard to the City of Greater Sudbury Act to make government more accountable and more practical in Sudbury.

This bill alters the composition of the board of health so that, of the seven members appointed by city council, at least one member must be a member of city council and at least one member must not be a member of city council. The act currently provides that all members of the board of health appointed by city council are members of city council.

#### GAS PRICE WATCHDOG ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001

#### SUR L'AGENT DE SURVEILLANCE DES PRIX DU CARBURANT

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act respecting the price of motor vehicle fuel and the appointment of a Gas Price Watchdog / Projet de loi 44, Loi concernant le prix du carburant pour véhicules automobiles et la nomination d'un agent de surveillance des prix du carburant.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** As you know, Mr Speaker, the price of gas is going through the roof. Petro-Canada, for instance, recorded a record profit of \$358 million during the first quarter of 2001, up a whopping 1,784% from a year ago. This government collects \$300 million every year in taxes. It has a job to protect the consumer and to get out of bed with the oil companies, and to ensure that if the prices go up, the excuses the oil companies make about too many people driving SUVs, that there's a shortage or that it is because of the weather—that this government stand up for consumers and appoint someone to look after the interests of the consumer and not look after the interests of big oil companies, as they're doing now.

1350

#### MEMBER'S DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we begin motions, yesterday the member for Toronto-Danforth, Ms Churley, filed notice of her dissatisfaction with the supplementary questions. I want to inform the member that I cannot allow the late show to proceed since she did not ask the original question. I cite precedents from May 14, 1992; April 11, 1996; and June 29, 1992, as authorities for my ruling.

#### QUEBEC NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I'd like to ask unanimous consent to observe a moment of silence to mark the anniversary of the 1984 shootings at the Quebec National Assembly and to remember the heroism of René Jalbert, the sergeant-at-arms who risked his own life to save others in the assembly.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed. If all the members, as well as our guests, would kindly rise and have a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker:** I thank all members and our friends in the gallery.

#### VE DAY

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** I seek unanimous consent of the House for a statement on the 56th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. I believe we have all-party agreement to speak briefly about this very important date in Canadian history.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** It is a privilege today to rise and mark the importance of the 56th anniversary of VE Day. As well, Sunday past was the annual Battle of the Atlantic parade observed by all our naval veterans.

Almost a million men and women from all across Canada volunteered to put their lives on the line to fight for their freedom in World War II. Over 100,000 Canadians did not return. The veterans in this province represent our living heritage. Their sacrifice and their contributions in two world wars, the Korean War and in peacekeeping efforts around the world were made to secure the freedom we enjoy today.

We are honoured to have several veterans in the gallery of the House with us today. These gentlemen are all veterans of the Second World War. Several are active members of the Royal Canadian Legion, branch 60 in Burlington, and branch 165 in Toronto, as well the Royal Canadian Naval Association.

Mr Speaker, with the support of the House, I would ask that these guests rise and be acknowledged.

Mr George Lacey, Canadian army, was torpedoed en route to Sicily. He ended up in North Africa, and he took part in the campaign through Italy and the drive through Germany.

Mr Frank Russell, Canadian army, took part in D-Day and the drive into Germany.

Harold Penn, RCAF, was an air gunner on convoy escort duties, spotting submarines over the North Atlantic, and then transferred to the Far East theatre of the war.

Les Preston, RAF, was a navigator on mosquito planes attacking ships in the North Sea and did photo reconnaissance of Normandy beaches. He was awarded the



George Medal by King George VI for surviving three ops in the Battle of Britain.

John Kilpatrick, Royal Canadian Navy, took part in D-Day and the Battle of the Atlantic.

Don Scholefield, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, sailed on a convoy escort in the North Atlantic.

Bill Shields, Royal Canadian Navy, was a stoker first class and survived on HMCS Trentonian, which was torpedoed and sunk by German U-boats.

Mr Frank Whaling, Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, served on HMCS Orangeville as a leading seaman and as a torpedoman on HMCS Assinaboia.

Ladies and gentlemen, our distinguished veterans.

*Applause.*

To all our veterans, we are indebted to them for the sacrifices they made through their military service to create a better future for us all.

We made a pledge to First World War veterans to never forget, but many of us in this country have indeed forgotten the sacrifice that men and women made on their behalf during these great wars. All members of this House are committed to making sure we honour the same pledge our veterans made to their fallen comrades so many years ago.

This House determined in 1999, the United Nations International Year of Older Persons, that we should do something special to recognize a unique group of Canadian citizens who helped deliver us safely through the last century. These people, of course, are our veterans.

Much has been said about the need for Canadians to better understand our rich history, filled with great humanitarian and military accomplishments, and we have undertaken several significant partnerships to that end. Today, thanks to the work of the Royal Canadian Legion, Ontario's curriculum has been enriched with strengthened Canadian history.

All members of the House are proud to join with the Dominion Institute to help veterans reach upwards of 50,000 Ontario students in the next three years through their memory project. This unique educational experience brings Ontario veterans and high school students together in classrooms and on line to tell the historic and rich stories of the bravery of our parents and grandparents who served overseas. Now in its third phase, the memory project's goal is to recruit, train and support some 1,000 Ontario veterans to tell their stories in classrooms all across Ontario. We hope to reach over 50,000 students across the province and many more through the Memory Project.

I am sure that when students hear the stories of veterans like John Kilpatrick, whom I introduced earlier, they will gain a brand new understanding and respect for the sacrifices that were made in the past for future generations. Mr Kilpatrick has been working with the Dominion Institute for the past two years to ensure that the legacy of our veterans is carried forward to new generations.

Every member of this House can be proud of our collective commitment to our veterans. As they share their

stories with the young people of Ontario, I don't doubt for a moment that they will also reconnect with their own youth, a part of their youth before it was interrupted by war. After all, they themselves were young, many nearly 18 years old, when they were first called upon to serve their country overseas.

Our veterans, as young men and women, solemnly promised their fallen comrades over 50 years ago that they would pick up the torch of freedom and forever pledge the oath, "We will remember them." Today veterans will be lighting the lamp of learning and sharing their stories with the descendants of fallen comrades and the sacred vow that they can never forget them.

As we mark the 56th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, our veterans deserve our profound appreciation for their sacrifice and, in turn, our province and her people will ensure their brave stories of courage and sacrifice are carried in the hearts and minds of each new generation in our province. We will remember them forever.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I'm honoured and privileged on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal caucus to pay tribute on Victory in Europe Day as well.

**1400**

Victory in Europe Day finally arrived on May 8, 1945. The previous year, Canadian, British and American troops invaded Normandy and began to drive the Nazis out of France. There can be no question that Canadians made a huge difference to the people in occupied countries and to the final outcome of the Second World War. Over 1.1 million Canadians served during that war, and over 42,000 individuals gave their lives. Annually, we remember them not only on Remembrance Day, but also on the Battle of the Atlantic Day, last Sunday, and on the Battle of Britain Day in the fall.

Canadian soldiers formed the main assault force for the raid on Dieppe, where over 900 Canadians were killed and almost 2,000 more were taken prisoner. As well, approximately 14,000 Canadians landed in Normandy on D-Day, and the First Canadian Army was instrumental in the liberation of the land of my birth, the Netherlands, in May 1945.

Everyone was touched by the war: families of the war generation here in Canada; families who served on farms, in the industries, in defence production, in the Red Cross and many other organizations; and the many others who were also involved in the war effort.

Indeed, our experience in World War II allowed us to grow as a nation. Through our wartime involvement, we gained tremendous abilities, which we are now putting into continuing our peaceful efforts. Canadian international peacekeeping activities are recognized worldwide. Canadians are called on in the most tragic conflicts that are still taking place. The respect we have gained around the world for being a peacekeeping nation is a positive legacy that grew out of the tragedy of the Second World War, and it is a legacy we should all remember.

As legislators, we are obviously very grateful to the men and women who served to defend democracy in

World War II. Without their service, we clearly would not be able to stand in our place and have the freedom to say what we say on the basis of democratic procedure within this Legislature.

As we celebrate today, we must each take a moment to pay tribute to those who served. We must each remember the incredible personal and human commitment made by thousands and thousands of people and their families. We must think of those who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives so that we could enjoy the freedoms we benefit from today. We also stand proudly to recognize our veterans and to reflect on their bravery and uncommon commitment to our country and a more peaceful world.

We are so fortunate that many of our World War II veterans are with us here today. We must never take them for granted. They have made sacrifices that you and I cannot even imagine, and they did it so that our lives could be better. Each day, fewer and fewer of our veterans are with us. This sad reality reminds us that we cannot wait until tomorrow to pay our respects; we need to do it today and every day, and we must make every effort so that the younger generations of Canadians, who have the fortunate experience of not seeing war on a first-hand basis, remember, reflect on and appreciate the tremendous sacrifices made for them to keep our country free.

As legislators, we have an obligation to respect our veterans and seniors with policies that allow them to live a healthy, happy and comfortable life, and that includes the best of health care and accessibility. They have paid more than enough for this, and we have a responsibility to honour that.

If I might end on a personal note, Speaker, as I mentioned before, I was born in the Netherlands in 1942 during those war years. I know that there are a number of members on both sides of the House who were born in Europe and indeed in the Netherlands either before or during World War II. We owe our reason for being here in large part to those Canadian men and women who liberated the Netherlands and Europe.

If I might end by quoting from Jack Granatstein in *Remembering Victory* to indicate the pure joy felt in the Netherlands, the country of my birth, you could perhaps understand why the people of the Netherlands still feel so close to Canadians today. I quote from the memory project, as written by Jack Granatstein.

"The staid Dutch went giddy with gratitude on May 8, 1945, and ordinary Canadian soldiers found themselves treated like the conquering heroes they were. 'Here comes liberation,' one teenager in The Hague thought when she saw the first Sherman tank approaching. 'The soldier stood up and he was like a saint.... And the people climbed on the tank, and took the soldier out, and they were crying. And we were running with the tanks and the jeeps all the way into the city.' The almost Biblical cadences convey the emotion of that day."

Although today was a day of great celebration 56 years ago when the flags of freedom once again flew all

over Europe, let us always remember the sacrifices of those 42,000 Canadian men and women who died during World War II.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.  
Time shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

We shall remember them.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** It is an honour to be here today to be able to remember the contributions of so many Canadian men and women to whom we owe such a great debt. Without them and without their sacrifices, our world would indeed be a different place today.

Most of us in this Legislature were either very young during the Second World War or, many of us, not even in the world yet, but all of us have been touched by the people who served so courageously in the Second World War.

When I was growing up in the small town where I lived, I was about 10 years old when I discovered that my mother's older sister, when she was 16 years old, had taken the train to Thunder Bay and gone to work in the Canada Car Factory where they were making Hawker Hurricane fighter planes. In fact, that factory became the largest factory in the world producing Hawker Hurricanes.

I discovered that my mother's oldest brother had enlisted in the Canadian navy, that another uncle had enlisted in the army and was wounded. Before the war he was an excellent hockey player, somebody who probably was headed to the National Hockey League. He came back and still played hockey, but not at the same level he could have before he was wounded. Another uncle enlisted in the army and, thank God, came home without any injuries.

I discovered that my parents' next-door neighbour—he had been their next-door neighbour for some 50 years, ever since he came back from the war—was in the Canadian army in Sicily and then in Italy. He was actually taken prisoner in 1943 and spent the last two years of the war in a prisoner of war camp.

Another fellow who lived on the next road over was in an armoured division and suffered serious injuries. Even later on in life, every once in a while he would feel something itching or painful in his back and out would pop a piece of shrapnel from the wounds he had suffered.

They were incredible people and many of us today probably don't realize how really incredible they were, because they were all volunteers. No one said, "You have to do this." They were all volunteers. They went willingly. People flew in Bomber Command in the RCAF knowing that the odds they would come back were horrendous odds, that if they survived 10 trips over the Ruhr Valley or the Rhine Valley, the odds were against them.

The father of one of my best friends in high school had probably one of the most difficult jobs in the war. He was a tail gunner in a Halifax bomber. Tail gunners had a



notoriously short life span because the German night fighters would come up from behind and attack the tail of the plane and you couldn't see them.

He never talked about it, a quiet man who hardly ever talked about it, but you knew that this quiet little man was somebody who was incredibly courageous.

1410

A few years ago I had the opportunity to go to a memorial service on a First Nation in my constituency, Couchiching First Nation. It's a small community, about 600 people, but they had a plaque where they honoured all the people from that small aboriginal community who served in the Canadian armed forces during the war. When you looked at the names on the list, you came away with the conclusion that anyone who was between the ages of 18, maybe even 17, and 35 had in fact enlisted in the Canadian armed forces—just an amazing state of things to happen.

We are all influenced by these incredible people in other ways. Later on, when I became quite involved in playing hockey, I discovered that virtually everybody who ran the minor hockey program—the convenors, the coaches, the referees—was a veteran. They were all people who had come back from the war and they were absolutely determined that they were going to make their community, our province, our country a better place to live. They sacrificed endless hours that I'm sure they never received thanks for in order that a whole lot of kids could enjoy playing hockey.

We need to remember that these people were also products of the Depression, that these were women and men who in their early years dealt with some of the most difficult economic circumstances that people had ever seen: they didn't have food to eat; they had no clothes on their backs; they had governments telling them there's no money for affordable housing, there's nothing that can be done to help put people to work, there's nothing that can be done to ensure you get an education. When they came back from the war and discovered how much money had been spent on the war, many of them dedicated themselves to ensuring that people would have housing, that people would get the education they needed, that people would have jobs and people would live in dignity.

It's interesting when you read some of the historical accounts of these incredible people. In a book written by Desmond Morton called *A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War*, he actually interviews someone in the Belgian Resistance, a person named Gerard Adriaenssens, who was with the Belgian Resistance when the Canadian army liberated his family farm near Knokke in October 1944. Thirty years later, on November 1, he started an annual march to commemorate the liberation. When he was asked why, Adriaenssens said that a platoon of men had bedded down in his barn for one night in that hard October and that their demeanour had remained fixed in his mind. He said, "They were not Rambo soldiers, as one now imagines, but rather quiet, simple boys with a dull look in their eyes, who mourned their comrades who fell that day. They sat there quietly

and knew that it might be their turn to offer their lives the next day so that we here in Europe might live in freedom, friendship and peace."

That is what we must tell the youth: the sacrifice these young Canadian soldiers freely gave for us. They will always be remembered, and we must always remember them.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### TAXATION

#### **Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

My question is for the Premier. Despite the fact that Ontario's corporate taxes are already very competitive in comparison with those in our neighbouring US states, you have gone out and recklessly promised to reduce them by another \$2.5 billion a year. Premier, I want you to know that I think that is irresponsible. I think you're putting us into a race that we shouldn't be in, and that's a race that is inspired by nothing more than the lowest taxes.

I want us to run, on behalf of Ontario's working families, a different race. I want us to win one where, when we win, it's because not only do we have competitive taxes but we've got the best schools, we've got the best health care, we've got clean air, we've got clean water, we've got a highly skilled and educated workforce. Those are the kinds of things that I think help create a highly sound and attractive business climate, and are also in the interests of our working families.

Premier, why would you jeopardize all that with an irresponsible corporate tax cut?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate very much all the things you want for Ontario. You want jobs, you want our families to be working, you want a first-class health care system, a first-class education system, an environment that protects people. You want the best of everything, and you seem to think you can wish all this stuff to happen.

Every measure we took to be more competitive—more jobs, working families—every initiative we took so that we could get investment in jobs and growth in this province, you voted against. As soon as the going gets tough, you guys just clear out of the road and say, "You're on your own, families. You're on your own, government. You're on your own, federal government." That's the kind of weak leadership this province had for 10 years that led to the bankruptcy or near-bankruptcy position we were in.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you and your government suffer from a poverty of ambition. You are inspired by nothing more than low taxes. We have a grander vision. We have something much better on behalf of working families.

Families know we need more than just tax cuts. They know we need a plan for prosperity, something that is going to sustain growth over the long term. One of the

things that both families and business tell us repeatedly is that a very important part of a plan for prosperity is the development of a highly skilled and educated workforce. That means good schools. You placed our schools in turmoil, you've given us stressed-out teachers, you've taken \$1.5 billion out of primary and secondary education and you've starved colleges and universities.

Premier, we think that instead of sinking all that money into corporate tax cuts, there are better and more pressing priorities. Why do you insist on jeopardizing our true competitiveness by putting that money into a corporate tax cut?

**Hon Mr Harris:** You're right: the Liberal Party has a grand vision. Here was the grand vision when you had the opportunity to do something: you increased sales taxes from 7% to 8%, you eliminated OHIP premiums that were raising \$1.5 billion and then you brought in a payroll tax to raise \$2.5 billion, another \$1 billion right off the number one tax that attacks business and jobs. Fuel taxes were raised in 1988, 1989 and 1991, another \$1 billion off the drivers on the roads; in 1989, a commercial concentration tax imposed at a cost of \$115 million a year to Toronto businesses; retail sales tax brought in on insurance premiums; several new retail sales tax applications; a corporate minimum tax was introduced, raising \$100 million a year. Do you want to know what that led to? Double-digit unemployment, 1.3 billion on welfare—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The Premier's time is up.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, I assumed you were proud of this particular economic policy, but you refuse to speak to the question, so I'll ask again: why you are intent on jeopardizing our true competitiveness? For us over here, that means good schools, good health care, clean air, clean water and safe and livable communities. Those are the things that make for a strong and competitive business climate. Those things are good for our families and good for our business, Premier. You're darned right we voted against every single one of your budgets, because you cut things that are important to our working families, like their health care, like their education, like their environmental protection.

I ask you once more, why are you intent on jeopardizing our real competitiveness by proceeding with further tax cuts when our corporations are already on a very competitive footing?

1420

**Hon Mr Harris:** As you've heard, we know you have this grand vision of taxing the whole economy until it stands still and can't create jobs any more. We know that's your grand vision. We understand that.

You refuse to look at the fact that when we made businesses competitive, individuals competitive, we got more money to invest in health care, in education, in post-secondary education, in all those areas that we acknowledge are important. But how do you get the dollars to do it? Do you tax people until the economy stops, like you tried to do? Do you continue taxing them at the highest rates in North America, like you voted

against every measure we took to correct? Obviously, you're out of sync not only with this government, not only with everything we believe in; you're out of sync with every business person, you're out of sync with the Prime Minister of Canada and you're out of sync with Paul Martin.

Here's what the Prime Minister said: "Our tax system is now competitive with the Americans." If you look at Ontario, he said, who led the way, the income tax in Ontario, the federal-provincial together, is now competitive with the United States.

You voted against every one of those measures. You're against Paul Martin, who said, "Thank goodness we've got tax cuts now that the economy is slowing down." You're out of sync with the whole world.

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier and it's about the shooting death of the First Nations person at Ipperwash Provincial Park in September 1995.

Last week, Premier, you said that on the day of the shooting death, September 6, you held a meeting to discuss the situation at Ipperwash and to discuss the OPP's request for an injunction. Can you confirm that you did have a meeting on September 6, the day of the shooting, to discuss the situation at Ipperwash and the OPP request for an injunction?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Last week I tried to correct the record for the misinformation that was given to this Legislature in your preamble to your question last December. The very matter, all these questions—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The Premier is going to have to withdraw that. You can't say "misinformation."

**Hon Mr Harris:** I withdraw that, but I stand behind the fact and the information that I've given you.

Secondly, the very questions that you ask, you ask piecemeal, one here, one there, with thousands of documents. These are the very questions that are in fact the matter of a lawsuit right now. We are complying completely with the judge in this matter—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Premier, take a seat. Sorry for the interruption. The member for Parkdale-High Park, come to order. He's shouted across at every question that's been asked. This is his last warning. If you do it, you're going to be thrown out.

Sorry for the interruption, Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** These are the very same questions that are being dealt with in the civil case. We are complying completely and fully, providing the documentation. We intend to continue doing that. It is in the forum where it belongs, fair and complete and being considered by an independent judge.

I don't think it's appropriate to try and hash out the issues one piece of 50,000 things, one at a time. So we'll continue to comply. It's the matter of the court case, and



we're quite confident that our role in this and my role and our government's role and the political role has been exactly as the commissioner of the OPP said—

**The Speaker:** Order. The Premier's time is up. Supplementary.

**Mr Phillips:** I proceed with what the Premier just said the last moment there. It appears that on September 6, someone in the government changed the direction the OPP wanted to go. I will quote, Premier, from a log, a verbatim of two commanding officers at the command post about two hours before the shooting, when they found out that someone had changed the direction they wanted to head with the injunction.

The one commander says, "Well, that injunction surprises me." He went on to say, "They went from that regular type of injunction to the emergency type, which you know really isn't in our favour. We want a little bit more time." These are the commanding officers at the post responding to a change of direction here at Queen's Park. "This is typical," the officer goes on to say, "where we kind of get caught and ultimately the ball's going to be in our lap if they get this injunction tomorrow." They say, Premier, that it appears that someone changed the direction the OPP wanted to head here at Queen's Park.

Premier, did you and the cabinet members go against the type of injunction recommended by the OPP?

**Hon Mr Harris:** That's not what it says, and secondly, this is exactly the matter that is before the civil court, and that's why it's there in a fair and impartial hearing and we're complying fully.

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary?

**Mr Phillips:** That is exactly what it says, Premier, and it appears very much that what you have been saying here in the Legislature is contradicted by evidence elsewhere. We have time and again pointed out to you where things that you and your cabinet ministers have said have been contradicted by evidence elsewhere. You say there was no involvement; we find that the injunction changed. You say you left hands off the OPP the day of the shooting; "Queen's Park to Take a Hard Line" with "Occupiers." You say there was no evidence of a burial ground; the government was forced to drop all the charges against the First Nations people because you found, and admitted in court, that the government had in its possession evidence of a burial ground.

I say to you again, Premier, the only way we will get at the truth in this matter is for you today to commit to holding a full public inquiry on these matters, so Ontario can finally get the truth. Will you agree to do that today?

**Hon Mr Harris:** You're absolutely wrong. The only way we will in fact get the truth out—and I am quite confident of our position in the civil case—is in the civil case, and that is the option the George family took. We have been fully complying with that, and we're very confident the truth will out.

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is also for the Premier. Premier, you and your

energy minister keep saying there's enough electricity to meet our needs. But your American friends George Bush and Dick Cheney are saying that they need more energy, they need more electricity—in fact, a new power plant every week for 20 years. They say there is an electricity crisis and they want our electrical power to solve it. Why do you and your energy minister keep insisting there's enough electricity when your American friends are telling everyone there isn't enough electricity, that in fact there's an electricity crisis and they want our power?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** They can't have our power. It is our power for our consumers. I think we've made that very clear. We've insisted that whether we own it, somebody else owns it, how it's regulated, we will look after Ontarians first. That's our role. I'm not elected in the United States. I'm elected here in Ontario and I will stand up, as I have always have, for Ontarians.

**Mr Hampton:** There are a couple of problems with what you've just said. Your energy minister has announced that you're going to sell off 65% of Ontario's generating capacity to international energy corporations. We already know that the price immediately south of the border in New York or Boston is double the price here. Those energy corporations will do what they are created for: they'll want to sell the power where they can get the highest price. NAFTA says you cannot interfere with that trade. If NAFTA says you cannot interfere with that trade, then I think you owe it to the Ontario people to tell us how you are going to stop those international companies from exporting the power to where they can get the highest price. If they start exporting it there, how are you then going to ensure that Ontarians don't have to pay the same price in order to get electricity?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Watch us.

**Mr Hampton:** This government, three years ago, was talking about California, but what you're planning and what you're about to do is even more irresponsible than in California. Our American neighbours are telling us very clearly there is an electricity shortage, that they want the electricity and will build the transmission lines necessary to get the electricity. NAFTA says that once you sell to international companies that want to sell the electricity, there's nothing you can do to stop it.

Premier, if you do believe you can stop them from exporting electricity, you owe it to the people of Ontario to say here and now how you can do it. Tell us, how are you going to stop them once you sell off the generating stations?

**Hon Mr Harris:** We will sell electricity to the United States this summer, as we did last summer, as we did the summer before, as we did when you were in office, as we did when the Liberals were in office. Nobody came to us and said, "You've got to sell power that Ontario needs to the United States." Nobody has said that before and they're not going to say it in the future.

If Americans need electricity, like they need our automobiles, like they need other products that are there, and there is an opportunity to build one, two or 10 \$10-billion nuclear plants and put all those people to work—the safest, greenest electricity around. Would this not be a

miraculous opportunity, if we keep our taxes competitive and don't follow the Liberal track of trying to be the highest-taxed jurisdiction in North America? Wouldn't this potentially be an exciting opportunity for us, particularly if the private sector says, "We'll build the plants. We'll put the people to work. We'll create the hundreds of thousands of jobs"?

This is something I acknowledge the Prime Minister and I have talked about. I don't know why you are opposed to that.

1430

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My next question is also for the Premier. People across the province do not understand how you can have one account of what happened on the day Dudley George was killed at Ipperwash Park, and then on another day you can change your accounting of what happened. They don't understand how over a short period of time like that you can change your version of what took place. When we don't know what to believe any more, when the story changes that quickly, we have to have a process to get to the bottom of the facts. That's why we need a public inquiry into the events surrounding the death of Dudley George. Premier, if you care about getting the facts out there, will you hold a public inquiry and call for it now?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** As you know, there is a process underway that will do exactly the same thing. It's a process that was chosen by the George family. We're complying fully and the facts will out. We're quite confident as well that the facts will support the statements we have made in the civil case.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, the only reason there is a civil case is because your government refused to call a public inquiry into the death of an innocent man. There has been a criminal case where someone has been convicted, there have been unexplained changes in OPP procedure, and there have been other cases where your government has been forced to withdraw with respect to this incident or forced to admit you were wrong, yet you still refuse to call a public inquiry into the death of an innocent man. This is unheard of in our province. It is unheard of in the rest of Canada.

Premier, when people hear you change your story from day to day, it leads people to believe there is something that is being kept out of the public view here. Doesn't the death of an innocent man call for a public inquiry as to how he died and what were the events that led up to it? Doesn't that call for something?

**Hon Mr Harris:** As you know, we didn't rule that out, but as we were proceeding through the criminal cases, the civil case was brought forward. We've fully complied. We've made hundreds of thousands of documents available. As I've said, this is not a matter to be decided one little piece out of context here and one little piece out of context there; this is something that should be decided by an impartial judge, and it is.

#### NURSE PRACTITIONERS

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

My question is for the Premier. Everybody knows that we are now short thousands of nurses in Ontario, and we also now know that you fired them by the thousands. Now you tell us you want to bring them back. Well, I know of 200 nurses living in Ontario right now who are highly skilled and who are ready, willing and able to get to work in health care. They are nurse practitioners. Working families were pleased to invest in the training of those individuals and now they desperately need to have them on the job. Premier, why haven't you found jobs for these nurses who are so desperately needed?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the Minister of Health can respond.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):**

I thank the honourable member for the question. The news on the nursing front has signs of encouraging trends. I can report to this House that there are more than 4,300 applications to nursing schools for this September, up by more than 1,000 since last year. It shows that students want to learn about nursing in Ontario, that they want to practise nursing in Ontario, and that is at least partially as a result of the \$375 million of taxpayers' money that we, as the government, have put into retention and training of nurses in the province.

Nurse practitioners are no exception to that. I can report to this House that, pursuant to the budget commitments of last year, we made a commitment to 106 nurse practitioner positions. We are up to 94 and I have every confidence the remainder will be hired by the end of the year.

**Mr McGuinty:** I wonder if the minister might concentrate his mind on the question. There are 200 today without work. Together we invested in their training. They want to stay here. I'm not sure if there's ever been a better example of your government's incompetence. First, you fired thousands of nurses. Now we suffer from a desperate shortage of nurses. You tell us that you are looking for nurses. I found 200 nurse practitioners. They're ready, willing and able to get down to work. In fact, things get worse: if they can't find work in the near future, they are going to lose their certification after, together, we invested in their training.

I ask you once more, how is it that at a time when we suffer from a desperate shortage of nurses I have found 200 nurse practitioners who can't find work?

**Hon Mr Clement:** As I said to the honourable member, we have a plan for nurse practitioners. There are future employment opportunities for nurse practitioners as we move ahead with family health networks. I encourage the honourable member to stay tuned.

Here's what happened when the Liberals were in power. Here's a quote from the Windsor Star, January 25, 1989. Here is what they were saying about nurses under a Liberal government: "Most nurses are disillusioned. They want more money, more respect and more say in decision-making. Seeing none of this happening,



many registered nurses are leaving their jobs for other careers offering far more money and fewer hassles."

That's the Liberal record. We are picking up the pieces after humpty dumpty got through with it.

### SPORTS AND RECREATION

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. The minister said in this House yesterday that his ministry plans to undertake a review of policy related to amateur sport and recreation. I welcome this review. We heard a lot in the press about Canada's performance at the Sydney Olympics, and of course we'd always like to do better and bring home more medals. Our Olympic athletes are role models for our youth. Yet today, with all the distractions of video games, television and the Internet, it's hard to get young people involved in physical activity. What is the minister doing to address this problem?

**Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation):** I appreciate the question from the member from London West, who is right. It's very important for us to encourage youth to get more active in physical activity, whether at a young age, whether it's amateur sports, all the way through to high-performance athletes. No doubt we would like to continue to bring more gold medals back to Canada. That's why I've been such a strong supporter of the Olympics for Toronto in the year 2008. I want to build on the good work of my predecessor, Minister Helen Johns, in bringing forward things like community foundations and other programs to develop grassroots recreation and sport activities. Active Ontario and the community sport opportunity fund are other examples.

Certainly, the very hard-working parliamentary assistant from London-Fanshawe, by the name of Frank Mazzilli, is very interested in this file, and that's why I announced yesterday that Frank is going to lead a review of sport and recreation programs to make sure we deliver those dollars in the most effective ways possible to encourage more youth to participate in sport and recreation.

**Mr Wood:** People in London have been working hard to bring major sporting events such as the Ontario summer and winter games to our city, because they recognize the opportunity sports events bring to the community. What is the minister doing to attract major sports competitions to Ontario?

**Hon Mr Hudak:** There's no doubt, if you look at the success of the Olympics and what it did for Barcelona in 1992, you see not only development of infrastructure and inspiration of young athletes, but an increase in tourism year after year after that. So we know the Olympics can be a boon for Toronto, not only for 2008 but much beyond that.

Other events, like les Jeux de la francophonie, and the Canada summer games coming to London this summer are right at that nexus between recreation and sport and

tourism to help create jobs in the community, to help create investment in the community and to inspire young athletes. That's why it's important as well for my parliamentary assistant, Frank Mazzilli, to come back to me with advice on how to attract even more national and international competitions to Ontario, to inspire our youth and help create jobs in our communities.

1440

### CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** My question is to the Premier. Earlier this morning we heard some heartbreaking testimony from some parents of special kids. These parents came to Queen's Park to tell us that your government is breaking the law, that your government has a legal obligation to provide services to their special sons and daughters, but that since 1997 your government has systematically eliminated that support.

By refusing to sign and fund special-needs agreements between these working families and the appropriate agencies, despite the fact that they are called for under your own legislation, your government has left these parents with a horrific ultimatum: either give up custody of your child to the province or lose access to medically necessary supports.

Premier, four months after a firestorm of negative publicity, which only happened as the result of the courage of some parents to tell their stories publicly, your government is still not funding special-needs agreements.

My question to you is quite simple: why is your government failing to live up to its legal obligations for special-needs kids?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** We understand that the situations some families face can in fact be very difficult. It is an important priority of this government to provide the appropriate services to children with special needs. It is a budget area that we increase each year.

I want to be very clear about this. Where no protection exists, no parent will be forced to give up the custody of a child to access special-needs support. That is the policy of this Premier, of the minister, of the government. No family will be forced to give up their children to access special-needs supports.

If you know of any individual, anywhere, any time, bring it to our attention.

**Mr Gravelle:** We do know about it, Premier. You know it as well. Your minister said the same thing, and he was wrong as well. You can attempt to skirt around the issue, but the facts are clear. Your government is breaking the law. Instead of giving children like Luca Rosati, Alexandre Larcade, Julie Caudle, Graham McCarney, Benjamin, Emily and Sarah Williamson and thousands and thousands of other special-needs kids the full supports they need, you are forcing their parents to make desperate choices. You have done that.

Premier, while you and your finance minister were hamming it up for the cameras this morning, gloating

about more corporate tax cuts for your friends, we heard how your government's indiscriminate cost-cutting and abdication of legal responsibility have devastated families.

These special kids deserve every support and opportunity we can give them. Thousands of loving parents across Ontario need supports in order to give their children hope that they can and will become the best they can be.

You are breaking your own law, Premier. You are failing these kids. Will you agree today to at least restore funding for special-needs agreements, or will your government continue to put corporate tax cuts ahead of the interests of our special-needs children?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I think the member will know that I am not at liberty to talk about individual names or cases. I have no authority to do that individually. But let me be very clear. To access special-needs supports, which have not been cut by this government and will not be cut by this government, no parent will ever be forced to give up their children. If you know of anyone, you bring them to my attention and I will fix it.

#### ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** I'd like to ask the Minister of Citizenship a question. Given that I represent a number constituents who are disabled and given that the current government has an outstanding commitment to introduce legislation, I would like to ask the minister: when will the Ontarians with Disabilities Act be introduced, and how will it address the needs of people with disabilities?

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** First of all, I want to thank the honourable member for his question. I want to assure all members of this House that this year, as Minister of Citizenship, we will be bringing in Ontarians with disabilities legislation in accordance with the all-party agreement that was reached in this House some time ago. I am—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Jackson:** "This year" is what I said. We are in the process now of finalizing the consultations. I want to acknowledge Mr Peters's efforts—he has been very helpful—and several members of the House who have brought together members of the disabilities community; also members of municipalities and the private sector. As committed in the throne speech, we are going to seek common ground and find shared solutions with individuals. We are very committed to bringing in an Ontarians with Disabilities Act that will be leading our nation, one of which all members of this House can be very proud.

**Mr Chudleigh:** As a follow-up, the largest school for the deaf in Ontario is in my riding. I have been continually impressed with the way in which the deaf community adapts to the hearing world. When offered opportunities, they generally exceed all expectations.

Breaking down the barriers to these opportunities will be a great legacy for our government.

I would like to know what steps have been taken to ensure the concerns of the deaf community have been heard so that their needs will be addressed in this legislation.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** Members are probably aware that my colleague from Halton is very involved with the E.C. Drury school and has on many occasions raised issues of concern about the deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing community in our province.

This government has made significant commitments in the last few years, increases of about \$800,000 in net new programming to add to the \$6 billion in supports that we're providing. We know there's more we can be doing, and that is why we're working closely with this community and why I've met on several occasions already with the Canadian Hearing Society. I've engaged a former member of this House who is well known to all of us, Gary Malkowski, who's been very helpful in helping us craft the legislation and getting it ready.

I am quite convinced that if we continue to work together and reach common ground, we're going to come through with an Ontarians with Disabilities Act that every member of this House can be very proud of.

#### TAXATION

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is to the Premier. Premier, you've been quoted as saying Ontario has a fiscal problem, but you could stop the fiscal problem right here today.

It's as simple as this: if you go ahead with your sacred tax cuts for the well-off tomorrow, you either plunge Ontario into deficit or you have to begin a fire sale of Ontario's core assets and slash more from health, education, the environment and communities. But the real priority ought to be to build those things up.

Will you end the fiscal problem, Premier? Simply say here today, "There will be no tax cuts for the well-off tomorrow."

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the member is well aware that it's not appropriate for me to comment on the budget that will be brought down by the Minister of Finance tomorrow, and certainly on anything as specific as taxation levels.

But let me say something very clearly by way of response to the preamble. For example, health care spending: through our tax reductions, through our tax competitiveness, through getting people back to work, through getting businesses making more money, we've been able to increase health care funding in excess now of some \$5 billion, about \$1 billion a year, on average, since we've taken office, and more in the more recent years, as you are very well aware.

So when you talk about cutting spending, I can only assume you mean the federal government, who in 1994-95 transferred \$6.3 billion to us, then \$6.2 billion; in



1996-97, \$4.8 billion; in 1997-98, \$3.9 billion. Now, as they start—and they still have not—to restore—

**The Speaker:** Order. The Premier's time is up. Final supplementary.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, you can try to manoeuvre however you want. The fact is that cuts to our colleges and universities are a matter of the public record. The cuts to the Ministry of the Environment and environmental protection are a matter of the public record. The cuts to municipalities, while you download the cost of services on to municipalities, are a matter of the public record. The fact that health care services are not being provided as they should in this province is a matter of the public record.

So your choice tomorrow is, yes, you can give more tax cuts to your well-off friends, but if you do that, you'll have to cut more from health and education and environment and communities and you'll have to put the province's assets on e-bay to sell them off. It doesn't make sense, Premier.

Say it now. Say, "No tax cuts tomorrow. We're going to invest in the things that Ontarians really need instead."

**Hon Mr Harris:** The question is full of such bump by a party that drove this province into bankruptcy, by a party that took already high taxes that were increased by the Liberals and tried to take them even higher.

1450

The fact of the matter is that we have been able to increase health care funding while the Liberal government in Ottawa slashed health care funding to us. So the Liberals have cut. We had to make up all those reductions they gave us and increase spending as well. That is a matter of record. It's a matter of record that education funding is going up, a matter of record that you will see tomorrow. We will continue to take the priority areas of this province and increase funding. The only reason we've been able to do this is because, over your objections, over the Liberal objections, we were able to bring in tax-competitive measures so that we could get the average Ontario working family back to work where they belong.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The Premier's time is up. New question.

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** My question is also to the Premier. We have heard you strongly defend cuts for the well-to-do and tax cuts for corporations. I would like to talk to you about tax relief that would help working families.

The volunteer firefighters in our community have formed the Life Safety Committee of Hastings and Prince Edward. They have through sheer hard work raised \$50,000 and purchased a fire safety unit, which they take around the schools so that fires can be prevented and children and families know how to safely get out of a fire.

They did it on the assurance that they would be able to get a rebate of the provincial sales tax. The provincial Retail Sales Tax Act says, "Firefighting vehicles, as defined by the minister," are eligible for a rebate. Both

the previous and the current Minister of Finance have refused to define a "fire prevention vehicle" as being "related to fire." Your government is stealing donations from the public that were meant to make their community safe.

**The Speaker:** Order. The member can't use that language. I'd ask him to withdraw the word "stealing."

**Mr Parsons:** I withdraw it. Premier, the government is taking money out of my community that was donated by working families to provide for the safety of their families and their neighbours. Will you overrule the Minister of Finance and permit these volunteers to have the money returned to be used for fire prevention purposes?

**Hon Mr Harris:** There was a little bit of yelling from your own side of the benches that precluded me from hearing exactly the name of the volunteer fire department. Perhaps by way of supplementary, you could repeat that, because I want to congratulate them and thank them for their efforts, and for the efforts they do year in and year out to protect property. Let me thank all those who contributed and donated.

Let me, finally, thank you as the first MPP who is Liberal whom I have seen or heard in this Legislature who is in favour of some form of tax cuts. Let me congratulate you. Let me say, you stand tall here in our books. I hope that perhaps over 50 years, maybe it could filter right through to the leadership, because when it does, your party will be relevant too.

I'd be happy to talk to the Minister of Finance about your request.

**Mr Parsons:** It is significant to me that the tax I was talking about was relief for working families, and it's equally significant, Premier, that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The member take his seat. Stop the clock, please.

The member may continue.

**Mr Parsons:** Premier, it is significant to me that when we talked of relief for working families, you did not answer the question in any way, shape or form. I'm sorry I didn't have more names for you to thank. But Premier, you have the opportunity to do something tomorrow. We have heard rhetoric about your concern for the firefighters of this province. I believe you are sincere. Do something for them. In 30 seconds tomorrow, you can put in the budget relief for volunteer organizations that are trying to serve their community, rather than just the well-to-do, as your government does.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I don't think I could have been more complimentary to the member, to the folks who raised the money, to the volunteer fire department. I made a commitment to you that I would talk to the Minister of Finance. I'm always happy to look at tax cut proposals, particularly from a Liberal. You've set me back on my feet. I'm astounded and I don't know what else I can say. A great question. I appreciate you taking this kind of initiative. Let me say to the member from Prince Edward-Hastings, and let me repeat, I will talk to the

Minister of Finance and see if this tax cut is one that's appropriate for us to look at. My guess is, the budget for this year is already at the printer's or has been printed, but it's something I'm happy to take under advisement and I'm happy to talk to the Minister of Finance about.

### VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to our Attorney General. Since 1995, the Harris government has established itself as a national leader when it comes to providing services for victims of crime. In 1995 and 1999, victims' rights and victims' services were, and I might say are, the centrepiece of our public safety platform. As you know, Minister, we passed into law a Victims' Bill of Rights, and our government spends millions of dollars each year on providing services for victims.

I know that one of our Blueprint commitments was to create a permanent Office for Victims of Crime. The necessary legislation, the Victims' Bill of Rights Amendment Act, 2000, has been passed, and I know that my Durham constituents, especially Glen and Brenda Copithorn, whose daughter Jennifer was murdered in 1998, want to see this become a reality. I'm sure Nola Lachance, Cheryl Carpenter and Kris Hills would also be interested in hearing your response today. These women were recently recognized by the Durham Region Police Service with a civilian merit recognition as they were involved in making sure Jennifer's murderer did not get away.

Minister, could you tell the House today when the Victims' Bill of Rights Amendment Act will be proclaimed?

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I thank the member from Durham for what is indeed a very important question on a very serious matter.

Let me say at the outset that this government's commitment to victims is complete, ongoing, and unequivocal. In December last year, we came forward and brought to this Legislature the Victims' Bill of Rights Amendment Act. I'm pleased to say that this act, which created a permanent Office for Victims of Crime, passed first, second and third readings. As a result, we have an advisory agency, the OVC, that will perform many important tasks, including advising the government on how to spend the money that is in the victims' justice fund and helping to ensure that the principles set out in the Victims' Bill of Rights are respected and adhered to.

I'm very proud to be part of this government that will respect the rights of victims in not only one part of the province or another but throughout the province.

**Mr O'Toole:** Thank you for that, Minister, and I thank you for standing up for victims as you do.

Last week, the member from St Paul's claimed in this House, and I might say in print, that the Mike Harris government has abandoned victims and that victims of crime are being ill-served by our government. Mr Bryant wrote, "The Harris government fails to back up their big

talk about victims' rights without any substantial movement." Minister, we know this is not the first time this member has had the facts plain wrong when it comes to this government's record on supporting victims of crime. Can you remind the member from St Paul's and in fact every member of this House what the Mike Harris government has done to support victims in this province?

**Hon Mr Young:** Let me start off by stating that I categorically disagree with the member from St Paul's. This government has come forward with more initiatives than any government in the history of this province; in fact, more initiatives than any government in the history of this nation. This year alone we will be spending \$135 million on no less than 40 projects to assist victims.

Because my friend across the way raised it last week, and because it was raised this week by the member from Durham, let me be very clear about this. We plan to proclaim the Victims' Bill of Rights Amendment Act, 2000, during the week of June 5 to 11. We are doing it that week after consulting with victims because we know that Ontario's Victims of Crime Week is a most appropriate time to come forward and proclaim this very important legislation.

1500

### RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, I have a very direct question. Will you guarantee there will be no more cuts to an already devastated ministry budget in tomorrow's budget announcement? For once in the history of the Mike Harris government, are you going to live up to your 1995 promise of no cuts to agriculture?

Minister, your ministry has seen its more than \$600-million budget cut nearly in half, to \$365 million. Your ministry once accounted for 1.2% of provincial spending, but now you are at less than 0.5%.

You offer us platitudes about food safety, yet you see nothing wrong with cutting food inspectors. Is this what your government means by common sense?

The animal health lab is key to ensuring quality livestock herds, yet cost slashing has forced this lab to buy used equipment. Is this a commitment to agriculture?

Minister, can you stand in your place today and promise that there will be no more cuts to agriculture?

**Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** My ministry and our government pride ourselves on the innovative programs that we have brought to the agricultural community. In fact, part of the initiatives that we plan to introduce are to take advantage of some of the economic incentives of various organizations that we partner with to provide more opportunities for rural Ontario and for the agricultural community. I look forward to the coming year so that we can implement some of these programs and provide more economic opportunities for a lot of our communities and agricultural businesses.



**Mr Peters:** Minister, there are persistent rumours circulating that your ministry's budget is going to be cut by another \$15 million. This is inconceivable. You say that you want a made-in-Ontario safety agreement.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Peters:** Could you stop yelling at me? You accused me yesterday of yelling. Please stop yelling.

You say you want a made-in-Ontario safety net solution, and I commend you because this is a wonderful goal. But how do you plan to achieve this without the necessary funding in place? Quebec has a quarter-century-old commitment to sustain a strong and viable provincial agricultural community. We should be looking at Quebec as an example. Quebec, though, commits over \$300 million a year for its safety net programs. How do you propose to create a made-in-Ontario plan when your entire ministry's budget is barely enough?

Minister, you didn't answer my question. Do the right thing: stand up in this House today and tell the farmers of Ontario that there will be no more cuts to their ministry.

**Hon Mr Coburn:** Actually, we've got a track record: the \$90 million we announced for safety nets. We were off the mark quickly and identified some of the stressful situations that the agricultural community found itself in. And there are other initiatives. We're quite proud. The made-in-Ontario solution is one that I'm working on with our stakeholders, and I'm quite pleased to tell the House today that the leaders of those stakeholder groups are working shoulder to shoulder with us to provide something that is long-lasting, effective, and sustainable for the agricultural community so that there will be future growth and we will be able to meet the challenges of the global marketplace.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** New question.

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** My question is also for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and I want to add my voice to that of the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London in congratulating the minister for the dispatch with which they got the aid out to farmers this spring.

Minister, your statement yesterday indicated that this government and your ministry—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Johnson:** The member for Hamilton East may want to listen to this too—plan to focus renewed attention and effort on rural economic development. But rural economic development has been a part of your ministry's mandate all along. Mr Minister, what have we been doing to date to foster growth and job creation in our rural communities?

**Hon Mr Coburn:** I thank the member for Perth-Middlesex for the question. Since 1995, our government and private and public sector partners have worked together to address the barriers to economic growth and to create new opportunities in rural Ontario. To date, we've invested more than \$250 million in rural Ontario. As a result, that has created more than 20,000 jobs and, in addition to that, learning opportunities in communities right across this province.

In the process, we have also overcome many of the barriers to growth that we have identified during consultation with our stakeholders. That's the benefit of working with stakeholders, that we work together to identify some of these challenges and provide economic opportunities.

**Mr Johnson:** Those jobs are welcome in my constituency, to the people in Perth and Middlesex.

If these programs and investment initiatives have been so successful, why are further resources being directed to fostering rural economic growth?

**Hon Mr Coburn:** The task force report on rural economic renewal, which was ably done by Dr Galt, the member from Northumberland, revealed that one of the remaining barriers to rural economic development is the uncoordinated provision of business development services.

A wide array of federal, provincial, regional, local and non-profit economic development organizations offer business development opportunities and services to rural entrepreneurs and communities. In some cases, communities are experiencing gaps in this variety of services, and in other cases there is some duplication.

The actions I outlined in my statement yesterday include steps designed specifically to address this particular barrier to growth, such as working with our communities to establish what are in essence one-stop opportunities and centres for business development services.

## CHILD POVERTY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** My question is for the Premier. You have a chance tomorrow to create a brand new day for some very poor men, women and families across this province. In your budget, you could announce that you are going to stop robbing them to pay Andersen Consulting. You've frittered away literally millions of dollars to Andersen Consulting, as they morph into Accenture Consulting, in a program of persecution of poor men, women, families and children across this province.

Premier, how much money are you going to continue to give tomorrow to Andersen Consulting at the expense of poor men, women, families and children across this province?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** We don't plan to give one cent to anybody at the expense of anybody in this province, particularly the most vulnerable, who have been helped the most by our policies. I think you will see in the budget tomorrow that they too will be given even more opportunities: opportunities you took away from them; opportunities to raise themselves up, where you were holding them down, to get out, to get experience, to get work, to get a job.

When I look at the welfare policies of your government, on top of the Liberal government, the dependence you created is shameful. It is absolutely shameful that you wrote off 1.3 million people on welfare and said,

"Stay there. Forget it. No job for you, no opportunity for you." For you to stand in your place and criticize the policies of a government that has given over 580,000 people the opportunity to break that cycle of dependence, to get the dignity of a job, is disgraceful.

**Mr Martin:** Premier, let me tell you what the truth is in this province. One in five children lives in poverty, and it's gotten worse since 1995. One in three children in Toronto lives in poverty. Some 471,500 children in this province are living in poverty. In spite of the fact that the economy has improved, in spite of the fact that you have created new jobs, in spite of the fact that you've thrown thousands of people off welfare, child poverty continues to soar in this province because of your cruel policies.

Let me give you an example: the clawback of the national child tax benefit supplement that takes, on average, \$80 to \$100 per month away from poor families that could go to feeding their children. Premier, in your budget tomorrow, will you stop taking that money away and giving it to these rich consultants?

**Hon Mr Harris:** First of all, when we get dollars from Ottawa, we invest every dime of that into programs for those children.

Let me also tell you that every study using recent data shows that while there are still children living below the low-income cut-off line, there are fewer than under your government, fewer this year than last year, fewer last year than the year before and fewer than the year before that. Every factual study shows that, including the study by Olivia Chow, a prominent member of the NDP here in Toronto.

Having said that, one child living in poverty in this country is not acceptable. That's why we've substantially increased funding. That's why we continue to give more opportunities. That's why we invest every nickel we can in programs to assist families, low-income families, so that we can have program after program—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Harris:** Well, if the member wants to continue to yell out and spew out that kind of information, that's what got you into third place and that kind of policy will keep you in third place.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I will handle it, member for Scarborough East, or you'll be kicked out. You're not going to sit here and yell in my ear. I'm going to look after it. Last warning to you today.

1510

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** To the Premier: last week I asked you about the inconsistent way the northern Ontario heritage fund was handing out grants in northern Ontario. We had learned that when the Raino brothers of North Bay were told that a for-profit company could not receive money directly from the heritage fund, they approached your best friend, Peter Minogue, who went to Royal Poulin, your hand-picked

manager of the heritage fund, and together they hatched a scheme to circumvent the guidelines of the heritage fund so that your buddies in North Bay could get money that was against the heritage fund rules.

Subsequent to that, we found out that an operator in Sudbury who wished to put on a similar type of tournament in the same vein as the one in North Bay also approached the heritage fund, but was told there were no such funds available for the for-profit company. Why is there such an inconsistency, with one set of rules for your friends, Premier, and one for other northerners?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** There's absolutely no inconsistency, and I think the Minister of Northern Development answered that yesterday.

**Mr Ramsay:** Premier, the inconsistency is glaring, and I think you should be checking your records to see if anybody else in your riding or northern Ontario has also made the same inquiries to your office directly or to the heritage fund as to the availability of grants to put on golf tournaments throughout northern Ontario.

There is a glaring inconsistency here. You said this was on the up and up, and I said back to you that if this was on the up and up, why can't all northerners understand and share in this scheme that your friends hatched, so that we all could have these golf tournaments funded by the heritage fund throughout northern Ontario? But that's not the case. It only happens with the North Bay friends of yours, who get the money and the rest of the northerners are out of luck. Why is it that just your friends get the money from the heritage fund, but for everybody else who applies the answer is no?

**Hon Mr Harris:** My friends get nothing from the heritage fund unless they have applied the same as everybody else can apply. It's the same process that was followed for the very successful tournament that was held in Sault Ste Marie. I didn't hear you complain there. About the tournament that will be held this year in Thunder Bay: I don't hear you complaining there. The Minister of Northern Development pointed out to you yesterday and answered the question: same rules, open, transparent. All the processes have been followed, and that's it.

#### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** My question is to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. I understand some \$30 million annually has been allocated through the Ontario research performance fund to cover indirect costs related to Ontario-sponsored research and development carried out in Ontario colleges, universities and research institutes. Can you explain how the research community in Ontario has benefited from the research performance fund.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** This is a question that is of vital importance to our post-secondary education institutions that carry out world-class scientific research in the province. We had asked Dr Heather Monroe-Blum at the Univer-



sity of Toronto to help us to reverse the brain drain and help us to make sure we were investing taxpayers' dollars wisely into post-secondary education and research. She suggested that we cover the indirect costs. We're the first jurisdiction in Canada, that we're aware of, to actually cover the costs of scientists having to use libraries and computer labs, keeping the lights on, frankly, and paying the indirect overhead costs.

Under our research with the research performance fund, in addition to the hundreds of millions of dollars to the Ontario research and development challenge fund, the Premier's Research Excellence Awards and the Ontario Innovation Trust, we're now covering 40% of the indirect costs of research to make sure that the labs stay open, that the libraries stay open and that the world-class research which will create jobs by introducing new products and services in Canada will create jobs in Ontario.

We challenge the federal government. Although they are giving a lot of money for research these days, they're not covering the overhead costs of universities, and subsequently money has been taken out of regular classrooms and is being directed to areas—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

## PETITIONS

### OPP DISPATCH CENTRE

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to locate the eastern regional OPP dispatch centre in the vacant and relatively new OPP building on Wallbridge Loyalist Road in Belleville, Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To locate the eastern regional OPP dispatch centre in Belleville, Ontario."

I very happily sign this petition.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** A petition from many concerned citizens of Ontario. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the annual rent increase guideline for multi-unit residential dwellings in Ontario increases every year more than the rate of inflation and more than the cost-of-living increase for most tenants;

"Whereas no new affordable rental housing is being built by the private sector, despite the promise that the implementation of vacancy decontrol in June of 1998 would encourage new construction;

"Whereas over 100,000 people are on the waiting list for social housing, homelessness has increased as a result of unaffordable rents, and high rents are a direct cause of the national housing crisis;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement an immediate province-wide freeze on rents which will stop all guideline increases, above-guideline increases and increases to maximum rent for all sitting tenants in Ontario for a period of at least two years."

Lisa-Marie from Woodbridge is going to bring this petition, supported by me.

### REINSTATEMENT OF TEACHER

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I have a petition that I wish to present to the Legislature of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas a suspended schoolteacher was reinstated and an independent public inquiry is requested;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To appoint an independent body to conduct a complete inquiry into why Laura Sclater was reinstated as a 'teacher in good standing with conditions and limitations' after having been suspended from teaching and placed on the provincial child abuse register for sending letters containing sexual innuendo to a 13-year-old student.

"We expect policy changes to be implemented to prevent this situation from recurring."

### SAFE STREETS LEGISLATION

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas charities such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada, the Goodfellows, the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, firefighters and many others participate in fundraisers on streets, sidewalks and parking lots; and

"Whereas the Safe Streets Act, 1999 effectively bans these types of activities, putting police forces in the position of ignoring the law or hindering legitimate charities; and

"Whereas charitable organizations are dependent on these fundraisers to raise much-needed money and awareness;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We ask that the government of Ontario amend provincial legislation by passing"—Bill 26, standing in the name of Mr Crozier—"the Charity Fund-Raising Activities Act, 2001, to allow charitable organizations to conduct fundraising campaigns on roadways, sidewalks and parking lots."

In support of this I affix my signature.

### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 307 people.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this government is planning a complete overhaul of the developmental services system, which could result in the closure of the three remaining developmentally handicapped regional centres;

"Whereas suitable quality medical, behavioural, social, emotional and spiritual services are readily available in the three remaining centres;

"Whereas there is a distinct deficiency of services available in the private sector, including reluctant dentists, kinesiologists, psychiatrists, physicians and emergency services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ask that you recognize that the three remaining centres for developmentally handicapped individuals are providing a community for the residents that live there and acknowledge that these centres deliver quality care and services by keeping them open and by directing private-public agencies with limited resources and services to access the resources at the centres and to work in partnership with them."

It's signed by a number of residents from Merlin, Chatham, Blenheim and Wheatley, and I affix my signature to it.

1520

### HORSE RIDING SAFETY

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas an increasing number of Ontarians are turning to horseback riding as a recreational activity; and

"Whereas many of these inexperienced riders are children; and

"Whereas currently there are no minimum ... standards regulating riding establishments; and

"Whereas coroners' inquests into horse riding fatalities from as long ago as 1977 have called for the mandatory use of riding helmets and boots; and

"Whereas an unacceptable number of preventable injuries and fatalities have occurred while horseback riding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass into law the private member's bill introduced by Tina Molinari, MPP for Thornhill, entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, in order to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used, and to amend the Highway Traffic Act and make it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to ride a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment."

I affix my signature to this.

### PRIVATE HOME DAYCARE

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** I have a petition from a group of parents from Casselman to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas private home daycare in the Day Nurseries Act is defined as temporary care for reward or compensation of five children or less who are under 10 years of age;

"Whereas in rural areas, there is a lack and in great part no public transportation and considering that the population is often far away from centres and schools;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government bring forth the following amendment to the definition of the private home daycare under the Day Nurseries Act which would allow a greater number than five children or less who are under 10 years of age in the rural areas."

I affix my signature.

### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I've got a petition from many, many people here concerned about the particular issue I'm about to read.

"Whereas the report of the McKendry commission, released by the Ontario Ministry of Health in December 1999, finds that Ontario is facing a shortage of over 1,000 physicians; and

"Whereas at least 286 international medical graduates in Ontario have successfully completed the Medical Council of Canada evaluating exam, demonstrating competence in clinical knowledge; and

"Whereas the number of Ministry of Health funded post-graduate positions in 'pool B' (that is, international medical graduates) has been reduced from 289 to 81 since 1994; and

"Whereas the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine has indicated that they have the capacity to absorb an increase in the number of entry-level post-



graduate positions, as long as sufficient resources are provided to support the increase; and

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly of Ontario unanimously passed private member's resolution 6 on November 25, 1999, which held that the government of Ontario should implement a plan to improve access to professions and trades for foreign-trained professionals.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care as follows:

"(a) to restore the number of Ministry of Health funded post-graduate positions for international medical graduates to at least 1994 levels;

"(b) to increase immediately the number of entry-level post-graduate training positions to the full capacity of the Ontario faculties of medicine;

"(c) to make the increased entry-level post-graduate positions directly available to international medical graduates who have successfully completed the requisite examinations;

"(d) to develop a plan to identify alternative funding mechanisms that allow more equitable access for international physicians to the health care system in Ontario; and

"(e) to appoint a committee, with representation from the international medical graduate community, to review and dismantle the barriers which have been established to prevent international physicians from gaining fair access to licensure and practice in Ontario."

I support this petition.

### BRAIN TUMOURS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 14 people:

"Whereas early detection and treatment of brain tumours are vital to survive from this devastating disease;

"Whereas brain tumours strike people of all ages, from newborns to seniors, crossing all economic, social and ethnic boundaries and all walks of life;

"Whereas brain tumours are the most common cause of solid cancer in children; and

"Whereas brain tumour research, patient and family support services and awareness among the general public are essential to promote early detection and treatment of brain tumours.

"We, the undersigned, therefore respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario to pass a law proclaiming the month of October in each year as Brain Tumour Awareness Month."

### HOME CARE

**Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** I have a petition which reads:

"To the Parliament Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"The heads of government reduce homemaking hours for the elderly and special cases. Governments have also reduced stays in a hospital after surgery or illness, by

promising more homemaking at home, but now we know that the governments are reducing these hours. The elderly are on a fixed income and cannot afford to have help come in.

"We, the undersigned, request that" the government of Ontario "review their action on home care policy and also request that they reinstate the home care program to act immediately on the above.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows," and this is signed by 350 residents of eastern Ontario. I have signed the petition also.

### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 106 people.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

"Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and, therefore, that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

"Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

"Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical locations;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in their communities."

This is signed by a number of constituents from the town of Atikokan and, in full agreement with their concerns, I affix my own signature.

### BRAIN TUMOURS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 14 people:

"Whereas early detection and treatment of brain tumours are vital to survive from this devastating disease;

"Whereas brain tumours strike people of all ages, from newborns to seniors, crossing all economic, social and ethnic boundaries and all walks of life;

"Whereas brain tumours are the most common cause of solid cancer in children; and

"Whereas brain tumour research, patient and family support services and awareness among the general public are essential to promote early detection and treatment of brain tumours.

"We, the undersigned, therefore respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario to pass a law proclaiming the month of October in each year as Brain Tumour Awareness Month."

### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I have a petition here that was taken up in my area, and other areas of the province as well. It's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas mother bears and cubs are hunted in the fall as they prepare for hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the fall are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas orphaned cubs have a reduced chance of surviving; and

"Whereas an average of 12% of the fall hunt, or 343 cubs a year, are shot in the fall; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted so extensively over bait;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to stop the hunting of mother bears and cubs in the fall and prohibit the use of bait in all bear hunting activities."

It has been signed by well over 1,000 individuals. I'm handing it to Christopher.

1530

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ONTARIO STUDENT LOAN HARMONIZATION ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'HARMONISATION DES PRÊTS D'ÉTUDES DE L'ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 7, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** It is nice to be able to continue the debate on Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act.

At the beginning, I'd like to recognize the member from Durham, who brought to my attention just before we adjourned at 6 o'clock yesterday, that I had brought up the accountability act brought in by the member from Toronto Centre-Rosedale and I shouldn't have been discussing that when he was not here. I certainly appreciate the member from Durham bringing that to my attention. On the same point, I'd like to talk about it today, but again I find I'm in the same position. I can't talk about a bill that—

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member is being deliberate in trying to screw around procedure and decorum in the House. It is clear that you cannot say indirectly what you can't say directly. The member is being too cute by half. I would ask you to rule him out of order and suggest you cannot make reference to a member's absence or presence in the House directly or indirectly. He's done that on three occasions in the last two minutes. I would ask you to correct that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** That is a point of order. I would ask the member to refrain from such practice.

**Mr Galt:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. To begin, I'd like to speak about two specific measures: key performance indicators and also performance-based funding. Students and parents deserve a clear picture of the ability of our colleges and universities to prepare graduates for jobs. That's why the Ontario government is now requiring post-secondary institutions to provide students with accurate information that can help them make more informed choices about their educational careers.

For example, if a student is trying to decide between program A and program B, the knowledge that twice as many graduates of program A find related jobs as those from program B could indeed be a deciding factor. At the college level, data are based on surveys of graduates to see if they're satisfied with the quality of education they have received and whether it led to a job. It is based on surveys of employers to see if recent graduates had the



skills and expertise to gain entry into the workplace of choice. It also takes into account how well graduates have managed repayment of the costs of their education.

At the university level, our students can now review graduation rates, graduate employment rates and Ontario student loan default rates from every institution. These performance indicators demonstrate the quality of education provided in the province of Ontario. The most recent indicators show that an average 94% of 1998 university graduates had a job six months after leaving school and 97% were working within two years. Colleges had similar results, with 91% of the 2,000 college graduates working within six months of graduation. I'm proud to note that this is the highest employment rate of college graduates since 1989. In addition, 91% of employers reported satisfaction with the preparation that college graduates had received.

We believe these statistics are vital for students and parents. They allow them to make informed decisions about programs or which institution they want to attend. I think we can clearly see that access to information about performance levels helps all of us ensure that the system is responsive to the needs of learners and accountable to the taxpayers. We can look at the system and see what is working and what needs further attention. We can also ensure that taxpayers' dollars are being spent well. Most important, those people about to enter the system can select a program or course knowing how previous students felt about the education that they received and whether it led to a job.

While I believe it is important for institutions to be accountable, it is also important for students to fulfill their obligations as well. While we are prepared to help students to repay their loans in various ways, it is ultimately the responsibility of the students to manage their debt.

One of our concerns was the high default rate on student loans we inherited upon taking office. I am very proud of our government's balanced approach to increasing the number of students who successfully repay their debt to the Ontario taxpayers.

As you may be aware, this year the default rate is 15.5%, of course still too high, but that is down from the 18.2% back in 1999. As a matter of fact, this is the third consecutive annual drop in loan default rates for the province since 1997, when the overall rate was 23.5%. This puts us all well on our way to meeting our goal set in 1998 of reducing the overall OSAP default rates to less than 10% by 2003. We need to ensure that there's fairness in the system, both to the taxpayers who fund the student loan program and for the hard-working students who pay back their loans.

I'm pleased to note that the default rate has declined across the system. The rate for the university students is 7.1%, down from 8.4% and already below the 10% goal. The rate for college students is 17.2%, down from 20.1%, and the rate for students at private vocational schools is 28.9%, down from some 31%.

I want to emphasize that the default rates have maintained a steady decline since our government started

reporting publicly on the default rates. This clearly demonstrates that our commitment to accountability—to measuring and reporting on how taxpayers' dollars are spent—does improve efficiency and effectiveness. Information on default rates is now available to the public along with information on institutional performance in key areas such as student and employer satisfaction and the employment rates of graduates. We are now allocating a portion of the institutions' operating grants on their performance in these areas.

This decline in student loan default rates can be attributed to a number of government initiatives. These include credit screening new loan applicants to be sure that loans are not given to students with a history of credit abuse; second, providing students who have low incomes after they graduate with enhanced opportunities to apply for interest relief on their loan repayments; third, participating in the tax credit to help students cover the interest cost on student loans; fourth, requiring institutions that have very high default rates to help pay for the cost of these outstanding debts; and fifth, requiring institutions to give students accurate information about default rates, graduation rates and graduate employment rates by program so students can make informed choices about their studies. All of these measures ensure that both students and institutions fulfill their obligations to the Ontario taxpayers.

Accountability was an important element in the government's \$1-billion investment in colleges and universities through the SuperBuild initiative. Funds were awarded competitively to institutions based on how efficiently they could use them to create spaces for new students; evidence of both program and institution demand; the level of contribution to the long-term economic strength of the community and the presence of partnership funding with private sources.

I'm pleased to say that Ontario's colleges and universities responded to this challenge, and today spaces for 73,000 new students are under construction right across the province.

1540

The Ontario government has also introduced a new approach to funding post-secondary institutions to ensure that colleges and universities keep pace with the changing needs of students and the demands of the workplace. By linking funding to performance, our government is rewarding schools that do the best job of preparing students to succeed after graduation and ensuring that colleges and universities are accountable to students and taxpayers. As in all sectors of education, this government is not afraid to ask how students are doing or tell parents and taxpayers what the results are.

This is important, because we cannot set out to improve the quality of education offered at Ontario's colleges and universities without first asking basic questions about performance: how many students are satisfied with their educational experiences, how many employers feel that the graduates are well prepared for their chosen fields and how new graduates are faring in

the job market? These are the sorts of questions we're asking in a consistent way, and the result is increased accountability to students and the public.

This year, a portion of our \$103-million increase in operating grants was allocated based on the performance of post-secondary institutions: 2% of the operating grants to colleges was based on the institution's performance as measured by graduates' employment rate six months after graduation, employers' satisfaction with graduates and graduates' satisfaction with their education. This portion will increase to 4% in 2001-02 and to 6% the following year.

This year, 1% of university operating grants was distributed based on performance as measured by graduation rates, graduate employment rate at six months after graduation and graduate employment rate at two years after graduation.

Working in partnership with institutions, we will further refine our key performance indicators to ensure accountability in post-secondary education. This new approach to funding will benefit those institutions that are responsive to student and community needs by providing relevant and high-quality programs.

Increased accountability is good for students and it's also good for taxpayers. The government has already taken steps to ensure accountability and efficiency in our post-secondary education system, and I am confident that the Ontario Student Loan Harmonization Act, 2001, if passed by the Legislature, will take us another step toward our goal of ensuring that our young people will indeed be well prepared for the challenges ahead.

Perhaps most importantly this afternoon, our government understands the importance of giving students and parents the power to choose. There are different students with different goals and different requirements, and every student needs to make the choice that is best for them. Quite simply, when students and parents have reliable information about post-secondary programs, they make better choices for themselves than the government can.

For taxpayers, performance-based funding and key performance indicators mean accountability for public money. Citizens should have the right to know not only where their tax dollars are going but also what they're getting in return. These measures give taxpayers a tool to hold government and institutions accountable for the use of public funds and to complement our accountability initiatives in other sectors.

For institutions, these measures reward achievement and encourage innovation. There are a great many examples of post-secondary excellence and creativity in our province, and we should recognize and encourage those institutions that are producing great results for students.

This government is not afraid to recognize excellence, and it will continue to support accountability, choice and innovation in post-secondary education. For these reasons, I'm very pleased to be able to support Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act, particularly as it relates tremendously to accountability. Accountability has become a hallmark of

our government and I look forward to unanimous support in this House. I'm sure with the understanding of the opposition parties, once they really understand this bill, they will be supporting it. I don't think there's any question. I look forward to its speedy passage.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions.

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):**

I'd like to reassure the member opposite that this side of the House does understand the bill very well. I received a briefing last week from a very good bureaucrat in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Our complaint is, why did it take so long? However, we do support the bill.

We support anything that allows students easier access to loans, but this bill does not give back that part of the loan forgiveness that your government cut in 1995. This bill does not give back the millennium fund that your government sucked up from the federal government. This bill does not give loans back to part-time students that this government cut in 1995. What this bill does is make it easier for students to cut through the red tape and the bureaucracy, and that is welcome on this side of the House. Anyone who has worked with students, who has children who are going to go to post-secondary, welcomes those moves.

As well, I'm pleased to say that the interest rate at the provincial level is actually lower than that of the federal level. I'm very pleased to see that we can be role models in that one area. However, that does not do anything to address the fact that the students should have been receiving \$3,000 a year in the Canadian millennium scholarship and instead you are giving them what you would have given them anyway: in other words, a net value of zero to the students. The spirit of the millennium fund was for the students to get \$3,000 a year.

Your own task force, Portals and Pathways, aside from saying that OSAP should be simplified, is also saying that this is a very underfunded system, and we're looking forward to tomorrow's budget with eager ears and eyes to see if in fact you will be funding the system to the level that it was funded at before you came to government. You cut nearly half a billion dollars as soon as you came into this place and you've continued to cut operating grants since. Your own task force has called for this and I hope you listen to those people that you commissioned to do the report Portals and Pathways.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** This bill quite clearly takes over from the banks, who no longer want it, because they're saying, "We're not making enough money, so here you go, government, take it back. It's not something we care to hold on to if the profit isn't rich enough." So governments are always there to make sure that the public is protected in some way when the private sector, on whom they rely, abandons their role in dealing with this matter.

To the member for Northumberland, the problem is the government needs to immediately tackle the root cause of students' indebtedness—immediately. Across-the-board tuition increases of 60% in regular program-



ming and up to 520% increases in those deregulated programs, where universities and colleges can now jack up tuition fees as much as they think they can jack them up, are causing serious problems for students. Tinkering with the loan system is not what Ontario's students and families need. Quite clearly that's not what they need and/or want.

Students are experiencing record debt loads. This condemns young and struggling families to a life debt sentence. Governments ought to be there to help those students and to help parents—middle-class and lower-middle-class—from having this kind of burden, which they will carry with them not just for one day, not just for a week or a month, not just for here, but for a long time. These are the things you've got to tackle, and this bill doesn't deal with any of those other matters.

I urge the people in the province who care about this issue to condemn the government and connect with them to change this procedure and this bill and the laws that are impacting these families and students in Ontario.

1550

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** It is a pleasure to take part in the debate this afternoon on Bill 19.

The member for Northumberland very clearly indicated the progressive measures we are taking to make sure OSAP funding is available and that it's available without having too much red tape. Our government is there to reduce the involvement of the government and it is there to cut through the red tape.

The member for Hamilton Mountain spoke, and I am pleased that she is pleased that we are doing the right thing. The member for Trinity-Spadina spoke yesterday as well as today.

Among the initiatives we have taken is interest relief. We want to make sure that if there is any student who is having hardship in repaying the loan, we've increased the interest relief from 18 months to 30 months. We'll be looking forward, in case there is somebody still in hardship, to them contacting the government, I suppose, or the members, so we may be able to do further than that.

Another thing also in this bill will be credit worthiness. We want to make sure that the students—if they've defaulted earlier or if they've had bad credit, then we may be very careful or the institutions will be very careful in extending that student loan. Our commitment is to reduce the default rate and we are committed to reducing the default rate to less than 10%. We are moving forward in that respect.

The new application for loans will be a single application, as I've said earlier, and this will actually facilitate the students' access to the funds. I'm very happy to be supporting this bill and I'm glad the members opposite are supporting it.

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** Overall, I agree with my colleague from Hamilton Mountain, who made a compelling argument regarding post-secondary education the other day, and overall it is a good and

necessary piece of legislation. There's a need to streamline the student loan process and the ministry needs a new mechanism to provide students with loans.

However, the government should be focusing on reducing student debt load as well, because accessibility is of great concern to most working families in Ontario. It's accessibility to post-secondary education that will provide the opportunities for our young people to be able to succeed, but also to be able to provide this wonderful resource for economic prosperity, which is, of course, our brainpower.

One of the things we have to remember, unfortunately, is that the university tuition fees are 45% higher today than they were in 1995-96. University tuition now makes up 40% of university operating funds. The average student debt load has doubled since 1995.

Statistics Canada reports show there is a growing gap between the participation rates of students from higher-income families and students from lower-income families. If we truly are going to have accessibility to post-secondary education, we have to deal with the hard issues of providing proper funding to post-secondary education.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Northumberland has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Galt:** I appreciate the responses from the four various members. I particularly appreciated the response from the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. Some of his comments were very insightful. Also, the other members who recognized cutting through the red tape and streamlining—the member for Hamilton Mountain as well as the member for Sarnia-Lambton commented on that, and I certainly appreciate it. That's been a hallmark of our government, to get rid of some of that red tape and make it a simpler, one-application type of thing.

You're focusing in on debt load and you're focusing in on not giving back etc. What they're missing is—I believe it is the student opportunities fund, or some such name, but it funds those who are in need over that \$7,000 per year. For a four-year course, at the end it's a \$28,000 indebtedness. When you compare that, say, with a car and you are investing in your future, I can't think of a better investment than in your own education, something like \$28,000. When you think about what taxpayers are putting forward, they're putting forward a lot more than that. There's been a certain amount in the donations that went to create those funds, but I think in all fairness, the members of the opposition should recognize what is happening in these other areas and that indeed there is an awful lot of assistance for students that was not there back in 1995.

The default rate and the changes in the default rate were also mentioned. I think it's only fair to the public that those students pay back what they have borrowed, and certainly we're moving in the right direction.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Mr Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

This is a bill that's had a great deal of debate, and I would reiterate what many others have said. It's not really a bad bill, but the question is, does it do anything for students? I think the response is, it does a lot for banks. It will help banks, which have been struggling to keep their profit increases in the double-digit range.

For students, it does produce a little easier system to get a loan, so from that viewpoint it's nice, but it doesn't really address the problem. The problem is the overwhelming costs facing young people and adults who are trying to return to the school system. Indebtedness is an issue for people making an investment. I would suggest that there is nothing better than we as a society could invest in than an investment in education for our citizens. The province goes ahead when our individual citizens go ahead.

I have previously noted in this House that over the last six years for community colleges, tuition increases have had to happen because the province has reduced the grant from \$5,000 to \$3,000 per student. I know tuition is now about one third of what it costs for a student. But I noted with interest over the weekend, when this government announced that they were signing a contract with a private firm to run one of our jails, that it was going to be only \$80 per day. This government views spending \$80 per day to lock someone up and make them non-productive as a very good investment, but for a community college system we spend about \$19 a day. That's 19 bucks a day to educate someone who's going to help. For another \$10-a-day investment into a community college student, we could move back from the \$3,000 per year to \$5,000 per year. But the language we always hear from the government is, it's going to be tough: We're going to have more regulations. We're going to have boot camps. We're going to have stricter discipline. We're going to have higher standards.

I think we need to talk about the really good young people in this province, who are by far the majority, and say, "What can we do to help you be successful, because our success is tied to your success?"

Students in this province face very real problems—not a problem getting into debt, not a problem that this bill really satisfies. We have a lack of equal opportunity across the province. People lack the ability to get the money to go to school.

We have seen the colleges respond to the cuts with a reduction in hours. That's a challenge for students because for them to be successful after graduation, to maintain the placement rates—and I appreciate the member from Northumberland noting that the job placement is about 94%. It varies at around 94%, 93% or 92%. Community colleges have always had an extremely high placement rate, but as you reduce the hours, you reduce the knowledge that students are able to acquire and you make them less marketable and less able to be successful.

Colleges and universities are being forced to have significant numbers of part-time faculty. Part-time faculty can be very good people doing an excellent job in the classroom, but when they are part-time, they com-

plete their teaching hours and they leave the building because, to make a living, almost invariably they need another job. When they're not in the building, they are not accessible to the students who need to ask questions. This bill does nothing to improve the ability of students to acquire that help.

We're seeing a loss of programs in Ontario, programs that ironically are in many cases ones that lead to extremely high employment rates. I have seen colleges cut programs that have a 100% placement rate. But the college programs are expensive ones. They are often in the technology or computer area and cost a lot of money for the college to offer, and so, in a need to survive, they will reduce the high-cost, though very successful, programs.

**1600**

There is another thing that causes fewer programs when you make the cost of post-secondary so expensive that students can't go. Colleges need a certain critical mass to offer a program. When there are a number of students who are fully qualified, have the ability and would be successful, but cannot afford to go to that college, the college may have to cut the program because they only have one half or one third the numbers they need to make the program viable. So the loss of financial ability for the students to finance it hurts every other potential student in that program.

We're seeing colleges go to larger classes. The college system, when it was first conceived, was based on the premise that there would be very practical applied courses and programs and they would have class sizes in the 20-to-30 range. We're now seeing colleges offer classes of 100 or 200 people. What does that mean to the students? Students who are very good will survive whether they're in a class of 30 or a class of 200, but students with special needs will have a major, major struggle to survive in a class where questions can't be asked because of the sheer number of students.

They also force adult returnees to have a very difficult time. I taught a lot of adult students, and in general, when you started in September, the adult students were the lowest performing in the class. They may have been out of school for two years, 10 years or 20 years. By the end of September or early October, they were pretty well caught up to the rest of the class. By November, they were excelling. But they were able to do that because they had the ability to get some time with the teacher; they had some time to get extra help. Larger classes preclude that.

This government has made no end of announcements about money going into colleges' capital systems, capital money that will build new classrooms and new buildings. I fear that instead of having the old empty classrooms that some of the colleges are experiencing, we're going to have new empty classrooms without the operating funds. The capital is nice, but I can assure you the funds to hire faculty and assistants and make the program run are equally or more important, and we need some operating grants.



In the Legislature, we tend to live in a bit of an artificial world. We don't know what it's like to be in a family that is not able to buy food the following week, let alone pay tuition. Within the last week, the Minister of Community and Social Services has imposed regulations on daycares. I met some daycare operators who say they have a significant number of students who have returned to post-secondary, but now with the new regulations, the government will provide subsidy only from a half-hour before the students start school to a half-hour after. It is not possible for that student to get from the college or university to the daycare facility in half an hour. I suggest it couldn't happen in Toronto and it can't happen in rural Ontario. So these students who are trying to better themselves and are trying to get a good job are losing their daycare subsidy.

I've spoken to some students who have said their spouse is employed and so the province has said, "We will not fund daycare for your children if your spouse is home." That, at first simple glance, seems to make sense, but the reality is that in many cases the spouse is working night shift, has worked from midnight to eight, and gets home as the other person is going off to school. The province now says that person should stay up all day and look after the children, when in fact, if they're going to work and be productive, they're tied up for the day.

We're seeing students forced to take part-time jobs. That may appeal to the capitalist side of people, but students who are doing part-time jobs are sometimes or often forced to miss classes, are forced to work when they should be doing assignments, are forced to skip out and do things to keep the job because they need the money.

Adults returning to post-secondary have a particular challenge that is not being helped with OSAP. One of the realities of OSAP that I hope this bill addresses is that many students return in September and don't know until November whether in fact they're going to get an OSAP loan, and so they've chosen to gamble. For some good people, they're not prepared to gamble their family food or their family house in order to get ahead, because they've got to put their families ahead of themselves. Hopefully, in this streamlining process, students will know before they start.

The cuts in funding from this province have done immeasurable harm to the post-secondary system, which this bill does not begin to address or to solve. There is not a recognition by this government of the real cost of going back for education and, similarly, not an assessment of the real benefits to the entire province when people either go to post-secondary or return to school to complete their studies. This bill just doesn't help remove the significant number of barriers that exist.

I have said before and will continue to say that we value good health care in Ontario. But good health care requires a good education system, and we have seen this government downgrade and destroy our post-secondary system.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I'm very pleased to join this debate and to ask the gov-

ernment, first of all, why it took them so long to come up with this bill. I know that from a student's perspective it's very difficult at times and very hard for them to deal with two completely different systems: the Canada student loan system and the Ontario student loan system. We support this bill. We think it should be as easy as possible for students to deal with their loan situation.

Unfortunately, this bill doesn't deal with the real issues that are happening in post-secondary education, as has already been stated here earlier this afternoon. Why doesn't it deal with loans to part-time students? They were eliminated by your government. We are basically telling part-time students, "If you want to study, don't rely on us. If you want to better yourself and become more competitive in this economy, you've got to do it on your own. There's no help or assistance out there for you."

The millennium fund: you may recall that the federal government made lots of money available to give to students who had earned the scholarships that were handed out with the millennium fund. What did this government do? It clawed back that money in exactly the same way it clawed back the child tax credit to poor families who rely on social assistance.

How about those students who are on social assistance? We've all had them in our constituency offices, people who really want to better themselves and realize that the only way they're going to do it is by furthering their education. At one time, they used to be eligible for OSAP loans. What the government in effect did was claw back their social assistance and say, "If you want to study, you've got to take a loan that you've got to pay back," whereas if they didn't study, they would be given social assistance payments. It didn't make any sense whatsoever to people. We made it tougher on people to go back to school than not return to school and simply stay on social assistance.

I always like to deal with the government's own statistics. I know that people out there have probably heard on many occasions from many different sides that the amount of money available for post-secondary education has dramatically decreased. People are probably saying, "That may be Liberal propaganda. That may be opposition propaganda." So I would like to quote some of the sections contained in a study, *Portals and Pathways*, that has recently been released. It is the government's own study, in which it refers to its own financial figures as far as what has been made available to post-secondary education.

It's very interesting to note that in constant 2000 dollars terms, over the last 10 years the provincial grants to post-secondary institutions have decreased by some \$600 million, whereas tuition, on the other hand, has more than doubled. It has gone from \$624 million within the university system to \$1.305 billion. In other words, tuition fees have gone up by over 100% over the last 10 years, whereas provincial grants have been reduced by over \$600 million.

This is borne out again when you look at the annual tuition that is charged for the average university arts

degree program. Back in 1991 the cost per year was \$1,639. What is it today? It is \$3,951, an increase of well over 100%. On the other hand, the university operating grants—in other words, the money that's being given to the universities on a day-to-day and year-to-year basis—have decreased from \$6,100 per student to \$5,200 per student.

1610

I could go on and on citing these figures and giving examples as to what has happened to the college system, but the bottom line is that over the last five to six years this government has dramatically decreased funding for post-secondary education. So it's no wonder that students through their tuition fees, and universities and colleges through their fundraising efforts, have had to make up the difference.

I think it's an absolute shame, in a province that has been regarded by the United Nations as having the best quality of life, that we are making it more and more difficult for youngsters such as our pages, by the time they reach university and college age, to get to college and university.

The one thing we admired about our system over the last 30 or 40 years was the fact that anyone who had the ability to go to college or university would not be denied the opportunity of doing that for economic reasons. But that's no longer the case. We had a survey that was just released yesterday, which shows that 70% of parents out there are concerned about their children not being able to attend university and college—70% of parents. This is the Ipsos-Reid survey, which was released yesterday. The main reason they don't think their children will be able to attend—a full 80% of that 70% say they can't afford it or don't expect to be able to afford it. That is a startling indictment of this government. We have money for tax cuts—and we all like tax cuts; who wouldn't like to pay less taxes?—but we don't have enough money to ensure that our students who are qualified to go to university and college are able to do so.

I know that my friends on the other side will try to put a different spin on it, but these are the facts: more than two out of three parents out there feel that a time will come when their qualified students, their children, will not be able to go to university.

The other thing that is very interesting about that study is that 64%—roughly two out of three Ontarians out there—want increased provincial funding for universities and colleges even if it may mean cancelling tax cuts or reduced spending in other areas. I really believe this is one area where this survey clearly indicates that the public is way ahead of this government.

The public, the parents of Ontario students out there realize that in order for their children to compete in this globally competitive world, it will be necessary for them to get the highest possible education that each one can achieve. They realize it. The question we on this side of the House come back to over and over is, why doesn't the government get it? Why doesn't the government get the notion that an investment in education is an invest-

ment for all of us? It will benefit not only those individuals getting the education, but it will also benefit our economy. This government doesn't seem to get that.

When we are ranked 59th of the 60 North American jurisdictions as far as funding for public education is concerned, that is just horrible. I don't want Ontario to be compared with Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas or many of the other states.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Where Mike plays golf.

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's another issue.

The final issue that I very quickly want to address, and one I addressed yesterday to the minister, deals with the double-cohort situation. I know the minister will say, "Well, yes, we've made some capital money available for more student residences in our colleges and universities in Ontario." The bottom line is that in another two years, an additional 90,000 students—those students who are currently in grades 10 and 11—will be seeking those positions in universities and colleges, doubling the number of applicants in any other year.

The question I placed to the minister yesterday and that the people—particularly the parents of those grades 10 and 11 children—want to know is: will there be a place for my son or daughter, based on the same qualifications they need today, in our university and college system two years from now? So far this government hasn't done anything other than put up some capital money for some new residences. But how about the operating money? I challenge this government to ensure—everybody's nodding yes on the other side, but I hope you will deal with this problem in tomorrow's budget.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** It's not a problem.

**Mr Gerretsen:** "It's not a problem," he says. It may not be a problem for you if you don't have a son or daughter in grade 10 or 11, but it's a major problem and a major concern to those parents who have children in those grades.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** In response, Mr Speaker, and letting you and other folks know that the member from Hamilton West is going to be speaking to this bill in just a couple of minutes—he's got a nine-year-old daughter, Kayla. He knows what it means for a parent to be anticipating a bright youngster like Kayla, like the kids of any of the people here, like so many kids across Ontario, like the kids of folks who live in my neighbourhood and in the communities I'm proud to represent down in Niagara, kids from hard-working families, bright kids—kids who I say should have a right, an absolute right, in the province of Ontario, as prosperous as it is, to receive a post-secondary education.

Think of it: there shouldn't be a kid in this province who, if they're interested in it, if they're capable of it, if they're motivated to do it, should have university or college doors slammed in their face. That's what this government is doing, and quite frankly, I haven't heard



anything from my Liberal counterparts to suggest they believe any differently.

We New Democrats believe that every young person should, as a right, be able to pursue post-secondary education. And that's why we New Democrats believe it's a good investment, a financially smart investment, a prudent investment to invest in colleges and universities in a way this government, the Tories, certainly hasn't done. They've dragged funding, stolen funding, from universities and colleges, upping tuitions by what, 60%, Mr Marchese?

**Mr Marchese:** Sixty per cent.

**Mr Kormos:** In the mere six years they've been in power, tuition fees have gone up 60%, closing the door, slamming the door in the faces of bright young kids across this province, the children of hard-working women and men who are not going to be able to go to college or university, as they have a right to, because this government's policies favour only the wealthiest.

**Mr Gill:** In response to my friend from the third party, I'm surprised he didn't say they endorse free education, that they endorse no fees at all, which I think came out yesterday. Maybe it'll come out again. We certainly believe that everybody should pay a fair share of their tuition. We want to ensure that every student who wants to and is capable of going to university should have the means to go to university.

One of the things the member from Kingston and the Islands talked about was the double cohort. This has been discussed for a long time. As I said before, my own daughter is in that double cohort, and I'm quite assured that there's going to be enough funding. We've already put more than a billion dollars into infrastructure to make sure there are enough classrooms. We put \$103 million in the operating grants to make sure there is going to be faculty when those kids go to university in 2003.

Our government takes and makes tough decisions and carries them through. In 1969, when I was going through grade 13, I remember that they talked about, "Well, grade 13 should be eliminated." Every year, the governments kept postponing and postponing because that was a tough decision, whereas the whole world had gone ahead. Everywhere else in the world, high school is up to grade 12. Nobody was able to, wanted to, make tough decisions. This is a government that makes tough decisions, carries them through and makes sure the funding is available for those kids who are eligible, who want to go to higher education. I'm very happy that we have the institutions, the University of Toronto, University of Waterloo and many others at that level.

1620

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I want to compliment my colleagues from Prince Edward-Hastings and Kingston and the Islands for their important remarks which dealt with so many of the problems that we are seeing out there that this government is simply not dealing with.

One of the realities of the most recent study which is really quite alarming is the fact that children of working

families whose combined income is less than \$60,000 are finding it almost impossible now to access post-secondary education, particularly in the medical school field. I received a letter from Bruce Sutton, chief executive officer of the Nipigon District Memorial Hospital, with an extraordinary level of concern about the fact that many of the students who want to access medical school education are simply not able to do it, particularly those from rural areas.

The fact is that the government has certainly frozen for many, many years now—10 years—the amount you can access in terms of your student loans. The other side of that coin, of course, is that as you increase the loans available, your debts are going to increase as well. It's a real tragedy that working families cannot afford to send their children for post-secondary education. The government just doesn't seem to get the point. They put forward a bill that I'm pretty sure we're going to support, but it doesn't deal with the major issues that are out there.

My colleague from Kingston and the Islands, when he dealt with the double-cohort issue, which is obviously one that's of extreme concern, also got to a very important point that I want to reiterate and I spoke about it yesterday myself: the operating funds that are going to our universities and colleges are absolutely falling incredibly behind. Confederation College in Thunder Bay, an extraordinary institution that has graduated 20,000 students over the last 30 years, has had \$17 million taken from its operating budget since 1994. They're dealing with a \$1.7-million deficit now. They may have to increase tuition fees, cancel some programs and lay off some staff.

The fact this government has to recognize is that they can't simply put forward a bill like this without recognizing there are many, many other issues they need to deal with that we very much want them to get to.

**Mr Marchese:** Just to add quickly to this debate, the Missing Pieces II study done by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives ranks Ontario 10th among Canada's provinces in operating funding for colleges and universities. The study also ranks Ontario ninth in public funding for post-secondary education. And in North America, Ontario now ranks second-last in funding for colleges and universities. We are not investing in our post-secondary educational system. We are at the bottom of the barrel. We are last, literally. We are not making the investments in the human capital that we say we need to invest in to be able to compete with other jurisdictions in Canada and in North America. I don't understand why we wouldn't be spending in those areas that even governments agree are critically important.

They say universities and colleges are important, but they're not adding the dollars. Even their own task force says that the government must urgently invest \$500 million more in the next four years. Their own task force, which I'm sure they didn't believe would come back with such a recommendation, says they have to put back money. You took \$2 billion in cumulative funds—operating funds—out of the college and university system. Not only are you not investing; you're taking away.

We argue as a solution not just a freeze; we're arguing that we need to get rid of tuition fees altogether and do it in a fashion similar to the way in which we provide our health care system, which is universally accessible to rich and poor alike, because there are social benefits, psychological benefits and economic benefits to making sure that it's universally accessible to all. We advocate that like the health care system, universities and colleges be free to everyone, because the benefits are clearly evident to everyone in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Kingston and the Islands has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Let me say first of all that I totally agree with the member for Niagara Centre that everyone who is capable should have the right to attend university and college. But I would just like to remind him that they ran on that platform of no tuition back in 1990 and then over the next five years increased tuition fees for the students by 60%, so I don't believe they've got any credibility at all on this issue.

With respect to my friend opposite, he makes it a big deal that \$103 million has now been invested into our system. You are still short some \$700 million according to the council of universities and colleges—over \$500 million in the university system and \$270 million in the college system.

On the elimination of grade 13, do you not realize that all you have really done is taken a year for which students did not pay tuition, for which parents basically paid through their property and income taxes in the secondary school system, and you've simply transferred that from grade 13 to first-year university? That's all you've done. The universities are talking now about a general four-year degree program. We will still end up with the same number of years between secondary education and post-secondary education for somebody to get a degree. The big difference is that now the students are paying for that grade 13 year whereas before they weren't.

Why don't you own up to that? Why don't you say to the people of Ontario, "We think we shouldn't invest any more in education than we are right now. If people want it, they have to pay for it"?

That is the wrong way to go if you want to invest in our future, if you want to invest in the youngsters we've got here in the House today as pages. The only way we will be competitive is if we have good, publicly funded health care and education systems, and you're doing everything to destroy that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the bill. Let me say at the outset that there's really nothing too extraordinary about this bill. In fact, we have an amendment we'll be proposing, and if the NDP amendment is adopted, we won't have any problem supporting the bill. But given that the Liberals are onside and that nobody is really doing a whole lot in here today—it's pretty quiet—the fact of the matter is that those who have labelled this a

minor housekeeping bill and just tinkering are pretty accurate.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** Well, our amendment would be much more than that, of course, but the bill itself really is not going to change much. If anything, I suppose it provides some kind of political tool, an attempt to deflect from the real issues, and the real issues are what you've been hearing this afternoon from members who were talking, especially speaking from experience in their own communities.

I've got to tell you right at the outset that what I can't understand for the life of me is, given the importance this government places on how people perceive their management of the economy and their management of those things that support an economy that continues to work for the people of Ontario, why would you allow our universities to fall to a shameful level, second-last in per capita funding in all of North America? Where is the common sense in doing that, given that outside of our geography, both our relationship to the United States and the geography of Canada itself in terms of our natural infrastructure—the waterways, the land that allows us to grow wheat and support cattle and herds, and the fish—all those things are a product of geography that's just luck on the part of Canada?

On top of that, what has really given us the standard of living we're so proud of, one that, I say again as I have said many times in this House, has had Canada chosen, I believe it's six times, by the United Nations as the best place in the world to live, one of the key ingredients on top of our natural geographical advantages, is our education system, the education level and the added value that Ontario workers bring to productivity.

**1630**

Given that key essential component in having a viable economy, why do you allow the universities to fall the way they have? The only answer I can come up with when I look through the material—and it's hard to believe a government would think this way, but I can't see any other answer, nothing else makes sense. What it's telling me is that as you look at the number of students from middle-, modest- and low-income families who are not applying to university where their given reason is the debt load they would have to carry because their family can't just cut a cheque and say, "There you go, don't worry about it," that situation is OK with you and that you've determined somehow that there's going to be enough educated people from the ranks of those who are lucky enough to be in a family where they can cut those cheques, so therefore you seem to think that will provide you with the high value added that we will need from our collective workforce in Ontario in the future. But even that doesn't seem to work, because I don't think it's enough people. Our value-added benefits are not just at the level of the engineers, the doctors, the lawyers, and the other professionals we produce, notwithstanding that they are among the best the world can produce; it's the knowledge and skills of the average worker that give us the distinct advantage.



A personal experience: I can recall when I was the president of local 525 UAW in Hamilton. We had a plant, Allen Industries, that at one time employed almost 1,500 people. They produced—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** No, not the candy ones. They produced car interiors. In the early 1980s they shut that down and they moved to Mexico because the corporation was enticed by the fact that they could pay Mexican workers something less than \$1 a day to perform the same work that was performed in Hamilton at Allen Industries.

I don't know what happened in the long run, but in the short term that plant didn't work, and at the end of the day the company acknowledged, certainly privately, that the Mexican workforce did not have the same skill level as the Ontario workers, as in this case the ones in Hamilton.

There is more than ample evidence that value-added, and in this case knowledge, education—tied with opportunity and other things but that's the key component—is what gives us one of our key competitive advantages. For once it's a competitive advantage that doesn't have one worker taking two bucks an hour less than somebody else to do the job. The competitiveness is based on value added, and at the end of the day everybody wins.

The whole system, the whole notion, of a skilled workforce providing us with that key competitive advantage starts to disintegrate, it crumbles from underneath, when you don't fund all of the primary, secondary, and, in the case of the bill we're talking about today, the post-secondary education systems. Where is the business sense in doing that?

With the new boundary ridings, I now have both McMaster University and Mohawk College within my riding. I consider myself very lucky, because they are truly jewels in the education system of Ontario, and we're very proud of both institutions in Hamilton.

I've raised this before and I want to raise it again in this context: your underfunding of the post-secondary education system not only does the damage that I've just outlined, but it also is pitting one part of the community against another, as we've seen over and over again. I've mentioned the cases here and I'm going to raise them again.

We had the situation of regional council being pitted against the Hamilton Street Railway bus drivers. Why? The whole thing was caused because municipal council didn't have the dollars they needed to adequately sit down and negotiate and respond to the very legitimate demands that the bus drivers were making. So we got into a real long strike, and day after day in the paper and on TV and on the radio, we heard one Hamiltonian going after another Hamiltonian. It breaks my heart to see that happening, because I know you caused it, yet we're having to fight in Hamilton—and when I say Hamilton, I know it's happening in other communities. I see my colleague from Kingston nodding his head. These things are happening right across the province as you sit back

here and say, "We're the tax cutters. We're saving all the money." Meanwhile, all the damage is happening in our communities.

Specifically to this issue, we had another strike not that long ago in Hamilton: MUSA, a newly formed union representing the support workers at McMaster University. The fight in the media, again, was between the management at the university and the union. But the invisible player behind the scene is you, this government. There were absolutely legitimate demands on the table on the part of the union. They could show you case after case of comparatives at other universities where they were underpaid, and also underpaid relative to the work that other people were doing.

The university is facing underfunding. Let me give you an example to talk about that part directly. I just want to read from an article published by Dr Henry Jacek, who is a professor at McMaster University, but for the purposes of my point, he is also president of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. This is what he said, in part, in response to your privatization of universities: "It means that for-profit business can now set up shop in Ontario and bestow a university degree. It means access to a public university for qualified students is threatened. It means that public monies will make their way into private ventures. It means that another level of bureaucracy, the quality assessment board, whose composition will include members from the private sector, will determine what constitutes a university education. And it means that students, already facing staggering debt loads under the public system, will be saddled with even greater debt loads if forced to look at private alternatives."

Mr Harvey Weingarten, who is McMaster University's provost and vice-president of academics, said this about freezing of tuition in terms of the implications for them. I'm going to put it in a different context, but that's the context the quote was made in, and it's this: "A freeze means that certain programs that students are asking for we would not be able to provide," he said. "It means that upgrades of equipment, laboratory supplies, hiring new faculty, we simply couldn't do it. We have an obligation to provide Ontario students with the best-quality education we can and the levels of funding now are challenging our ability to do that."

Talk about an explosive mixture. Then, in that fiscal straitjacket—what other word is there?—that management faces groups of their employees who put legitimate demands on the table. What are they supposed to do? But then that's not your problem, is it? Because you just stand back and say, "It's the board of governors at the university that are ultimately responsible. We don't make those decisions." But, damn it, when you don't give the funding that's necessary to provide the service, how can you not be at fault?

1640

That's why I opened my comments with not understanding at all what this government's doing. With most of the mean-spirited things you do, at least one can see

the motivation and understand it. You may disagree, but at least you understand the why. I don't understand this one. It seems to me that you ought to be announcing record levels of investment in all of our education system, but specifically in post-secondary education, because of the difference it makes to the quality of life overall. I bring you back to that again. Everything we do is supposed to be about that quality of life, not that the quality of life has to adapt to whatever you decide is the vision of this province we all have to live in.

By the way, McMaster has announced a 2% increase every year for the next five years. They have made their announcement. Everything we've heard today and all the numbers we've talked about today are only going to get worse. The trend line is worse, worse, worse. Why? Is that just the price we have to pay for you to make your announcement tomorrow about further tax cuts? That's the only thing left. You know it's wrong. You know it's doing damage. Your friends are taken care of because they can afford it anyway, so what the heck, if this is one of the things you have to live with to put your tax cut in place, then so be it.

As we are beginning to find out, that's what gave us Walkerton, in part. What's your excuse going to be in terms of the education Walkerton we are looking at now that's going to explode over the next few years? What's your explanation going to be, when we are telling you now that that's where we're heading?

Believe me, this is not just the opposition. There was a poll. It has probably been referenced before, but I'm going to underscore the message. There was an Ipsos-Reid poll published on May 7 that was commissioned by OPSEU, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, CUPE and the Canadian Federation of Students that showed two thirds of Ontarians are concerned about access to post-secondary education, and 80% said they won't be able to pay the high tuition fees charged under a Conservative government.

My friend from Kingston and the Islands mentioned earlier that we don't have a lot of credibility on this issue. I want to put on the record that, contrary to his throwaway line, the fact of the matter is that in the midst of the deepest recession since the Depression of the 1930s, we spent, as a government, almost twice as much money on capital funding as you are now, coming out of the biggest economic boom and the greatest bull market North America has ever seen.

You may say that's the wrong thing to do. We can have that debate about whether you should do that during a recession or not. But I'll tell you something: there was an assurance on the part of our government that the competitive advantage we got from having the kind of high-quality education system and the universal accessibility that we had was maintained and was there for the students of that era. They're benefiting from that now, if you think about the years that have gone by. Quite frankly, prior to that, all of us Ontarians are benefiting from the dividends we received from the investment of previous Tory governments that initially set up the whole

system of public universities and public community colleges. You've got us going in the opposite direction.

Not only that, but in the midst of a recession, the key thing people need is a job. You talk about jobs. You talk a great story. That's sure easy to do when the economy is booming. What'll be interesting over the next couple of years is to see how you treat job creation when we're in tough times, because if the levels of funding that we had put in place with the universities had just been maintained, we wouldn't be in the jackpot we're in now.

Read the submissions made by the various organizations that care about our university and college system and ask yourselves, as individual members, how can this be helping Ontario? Because in the absence of that, we have to assume that you just don't care whether everybody who deserves an opportunity to a post-secondary education gets one or not.

If it was just sad, that would be bad enough, but it's worse than that. It's not just a sad situation; you're talking about people's future. You're talking directly about the quality of life of the next generation of families, because we know that people who have a university education will make a lot more money out in the workforce, and also the overall benefit to our Ontario economy, where we all benefit from what someone else does. If I've got a co-worker who's off in some part of the economy being productive and giving a competitive advantage that no one else in the world has, based primarily on their education, I'm going to benefit from that and they're going to benefit if I'm adding the same in the work that I do.

That may not be your big, fancy macroeconomics, but let me tell you, that's economics in the community, on the streets where we live, and the economics of sitting at the kitchen table and saying, "What are we going to do about providing for our kids' future?" That didn't used to be the kind of crisis it is, and the bill you have on the floor today is going to do nothing to mitigate that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Questions or comments? The member for Bramalea-Malton-Gore-Springdale.

**Mr Gill:** Mr Speaker, I know the riding name is a little difficult and most people get thrown off. Even in the riding sometimes they ask me. If I'm travelling across the country, I just say, "Toronto airport? Yes, that's my riding." I'm very happy to have Toronto airport in my riding, because the GTA is spending about \$4.5 billion right now, and we're going to build a new power plant at a cost of \$1 billion Canadian, and there's going to be a new hospital in my riding. So I'm very happy.

It's fair that I remind the viewers at home and the members here of the name of this bill, because just now the speaker from Hamilton West was all over the place except to really zero in on this bill. This is Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act.

One of the things I'm very happy that the member opposite from Hamilton West spoke about is, "Six years in a row Canada has been ranked as the number one



country in which to live, work and raise a family.” I’ve said it before: Ontario certainly has led Canada, and in terms of growth, Ontario has led not only Canada but all the G7 countries.

At the same time, the speaker from Hamilton West said, “Kids are having a hard time going to university.” That is not the case. In fact, enrolment has gone up, the number of applications has gone up and we are going to be increasing the number of students going to medical school by, I believe, 40 additional, whereas the NDP in their time had cut the enrolment in the medical program by 10%. So we are bringing in a lot of good measures to make sure that facilities and teachers are available for the students.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I think the last member better check his facts, because I’m looking at the government’s own document, Portals and Pathways, and at the number of people who are actually enrolled in universities and colleges. It’s identical to what it was in 1995-96. It’s marginally different, I grant you that, by about 3,000, on 432,000. So the number of people who are going to colleges and universities has not gone up during that period of time.

But the point that the member from Hamilton was making—and he can speak for himself as well, much better than I can—is that even during the booming economy over the last five years, why didn’t you take some of that money and rather than put it into corporate tax cuts, put it back into the university system?

1650

I realize full well that back in 1995 we had a major problem in this province. We had a \$12-billion annual deficit; it had to be wrestled to the ground and some drastic steps may have had to be taken. But it was not necessary to start giving people tax cuts on an annual basis before the deficit was wrestled to the ground. Why you wouldn’t have put some of that much-needed money back into the university and college system, where we now rank 59th out of 60 in North America and last, 10th out of 10 in Canada, is absolutely inexcusable.

If you believe in investment, sir, then surely to goodness the first thing we should be investing in is the young people in this province. That’s what this is all about. Your bill does absolutely nothing for that at all. It doesn’t deal with that issue at all, and that’s what it ought to be dealing with.

**Mr Marchese:** I’m happy to support my colleague from Hamilton West with 20 minutes of rational and passionate opposition to what this government has been doing for the last six years—rational and passionate opposition, which is what the public expects of us here on this side and we give it as best we can.

My colleague said that in North America Ontario ranks second-last in funding for colleges and universities. How do you people do it? With what kind of pride do you tell the public that you are second-last in your funding of colleges and universities in North America? That takes a lot of hubris, I’ve got to tell you, to be able to stand up and say, “We are proud to be second-last in North America.”

I’ve got to tell the member for that big, long riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton—

**Mr Gill:** Springdale.

**Mr Marchese:**—and Springdale, I missed that. It’s huge, I know. The Ipsos-Reid study that was released yesterday—this is a polling firm that you people are very familiar with—has shown that over 70% of the public, including 53% of your PC supporters, are saying they fear that young people are not going to make it to university, even if they are well qualified.

They’re willing to give up the tax cut in order to make sure that you put in the investment you’ve got to put in there. Four out of five people are worried, including 70% of those polled who are not parents. They are worried that these young people are not going to make it.

If they’re not going to make it in a good economic environment, as my colleague from Hamilton West was saying, when are you people going to invest? If not now, when? You haven’t done anything in good economic times. If the bad times come, when are you people going to invest? Your own study says you’ve got to invest over \$500 million. When will you do that?

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I am very pleased to speak today on Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act. We seem to be getting off on tangents, but this act simply permits students, both college and university, to make one application rather than two to obtain their student loans.

This fits in with our government’s intention to cut out red tape and I think it’s very important. In Cambridge riding is sited Conestoga College which, year after year, has been rated number one in various fields in the province of Ontario and I am very proud to represent that riding.

We also have a group of interested citizens—they call themselves the Cambridge Consortium—who are working very hard to attempt to bring part of a university to Cambridge, which we certainly need, and we have a great site. The Cambridge Consortium has been working closely with the University of Waterloo, in particular their school of architecture, which is a world-recognized school of architecture, having a branch, by the way, in Rome, Italy.

There is an excellent site in Cambridge right on the Grand River, being a heritage river, very close to downtown Cambridge, which is available at no cost to the university. The city fathers have gotten behind the project, and I am working with our government in order to obtain funding for a project of that kind.

University students: I remember that far back, although it was a long time ago, and the less running around we can have these kids do and the more studying they do, the better off they’ll be.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Christopherson:** I want to thank the members from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale; Kingston and the Islands; Trinity-Spadina; and Cambridge.

Dealing with the first speaker first, it was interesting that the member accused me of not zeroing in on the bill,

which really is curious since I said at the outset I didn't think it warranted the attention it was getting here because it was a minor bill and what's really important is funding, and that's what I spoke to. I would also point out to you that his colleague the member from Cambridge started his comments by saying how we'd gotten off topic and were not dealing with the bill directly and then, after that, he promptly moved off Bill 19 and talked about his riding, which is a perfectly legitimate thing to do, but it does rather undermine your argument that I've committed some horrible sin here by talking about something other than the actual words contained in Bill 19.

I might also point out to my friend from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale that when he makes reference to the 10% cut, it is factually correct. What he of course leaves out is the fact that that initiative was led by the then Tory federal government and supported by all of the provinces and all of the governments representing all of the parties. They got it wrong, no question about that, but don't leave the impression that somehow we were out of step and did something extraordinarily silly, because it was the entire nation that moved in that direction, and that was wrong. What you have done to correct it is next to nothing, but that's a different issue.

I want to say to the member from Kingston and the Islands—when he was talking, he was making reference to my comments about fewer students—that there was a study released talking about McMaster University which showed there were 5.22% fewer students from median incomes of \$50,000 or less in 1998. How is that benefiting Ontarians and our children? That was the question. None of you addressed it, by the way.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm pleased to rise in support of this legislation because it helps students get financial help to go to college or university, and that's good for all Ontarians.

Accessibility is important. Our government's election platform, the Blueprint, promised that "every willing and qualified Ontario student will continue to be able to attend college or university." Harmonizing the federal and provincial loan programs under a single provider with improved measures for debt relief is a step forward for Ontario students. But while we have devoted much time in this debate to ensuring access for students, I feel it is also important for us to talk about excellence and quality in our post-secondary system. Helping students pay tuition is important, but so is ensuring that students get value and quality for their tuition dollar. That's why I'd like to take a few minutes to discuss our government's focus on encouraging excellence in Ontario's colleges and universities.

I'd first like to speak about facilities renewal. New buildings and programs are an important part of our government's commitment to post-secondary education and training, but ensuring that existing facilities are well maintained and used is also important. That's why our government has taken steps to improve quality by

investing in maintenance and renovations for college and university buildings.

Individual colleges and universities are responsible for ensuring that their facilities are maintained in good repair and that they provide a safe environment for faculty, staff and students. They are also responsible for ensuring their facilities are accessible by the physically challenged and are energy-efficient.

The facilities renewal program is an ongoing program intended to assist institutions in meeting these obligations. Institutions are able to select projects that meet program guidelines according to their own needs. This may include deferred maintenance items such as major building system upgrades, roof repairs, heating and ventilating system upgrades, mechanical and electrical system upgrades and building envelope repairs or projects within existing space that support the anticipated increase in students who will be seeking post-secondary education in the coming years.

**1700**

Last year the government made a \$95-million investment in the facilities renewal program, a 35% increase from the previous years and the largest in-year investment in the program since its inception in 1986. We will continue to work with institutions to ensure that maintenance and facilities renewal remains a priority.

Next I would like to speak about technology and innovation. Excellence also means that students have the opportunity to study new and emerging disciplines and have up-to-date facilities and equipment. That's why I'm proud of our government's achievements to improve education in modern and high-technology disciplines that are in demand by students and employers, initiatives like the \$500-million strategic skills investment program that encourages industry, educators and community partners to work with government to address skill and knowledge shortages in our education institutions.

This initiative has improved Ontario's capacity to compete in the modern economy, from improving practices in old industries like forestry and mining to promoting entirely new fields like advanced ceramics and nanotechnology. In emerging fields, modernization and excellence go hand in hand and our government has made a significant commitment to ensuring Ontario's colleges and universities are ready to compete today and in the future.

To further support excellence in science and high technology, we introduced the access to opportunities program, called ATOP, which will invest up to \$228 million to increase the number of opportunities students have to study in these high-demand fields. With contributions from private sector partners, this investment could reach \$346 million by the end of this year. Overall, this funding will create spaces for 23,000 new students at Ontario colleges and universities and is a substantial response to the high demand for these programs.

In my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, I was very pleased to be part of the introduction of this to Georgian College. As you know, Georgian College serves a



number of areas in Simcoe county, not just the city of Barrie but also into the district of Muskoka and the county of Dufferin in terms of its campuses. The type of facility that is being provided at Georgian College in the automotive institute through the funding through ATOP is seeing the campus increasing tremendously in terms of opportunities for higher education, but also in the opportunities for students. So we're very pleased that program came to Georgian College.

We should not forget the importance of research activities to post-secondary education. Research funding helps to keep the best faculty and students working in Ontario, as well as producing benefits for the economy. For these reasons, the province of Ontario has been an active supporter of university and college-based research. Through the Ontario research and development challenge fund, \$550 million is being invested over 10 years to support leading edge research in our province. The Ontario government also established the Ontario research performance fund, also called RPF, to help Ontario's universities, colleges and research institutions cover the indirect costs of provincially funded scientific and technological research. These expenses include technology transfer offices, libraries, computer networks, administration, heat, electrical power and others associated with high-tech R&D. This fund provides \$30 million annually to colleges, universities and research institutes for this purpose.

I want to speak next on performance indicators and performance funding. My colleague spoke earlier to the importance of publishing key performance indicators and basing operating funding on the performance of institutions. While it was noted that these initiatives are important to improve the accountability of institutions to students and taxpayers, they are also important tools to improve the quality of post-secondary education in our province. Institutions should be free to innovate but should also be accountable for the results. I believe that publishing KPIs and tying funding to performance are important ways to improve the quality of university and college education in our province. I would say proudly, as the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, that the record of Georgian College in terms of their placement of their graduates is in excess of 90%. That's a tremendous record that they should be proud of and that the province would be proud of.

I'd like to speak next on quality improvement plans. While others have spoken of our government's requirement that institutions which have chosen to raise tuition fees set aside 30% of their increased revenue for student aid, I would like to point out that the remaining 70% must be used to improve the quality of our academic programs. When we say "quality," we mean things like smaller class sizes, better access to faculty for undergraduates, more research opportunities and better equipment and facilities. To ensure transparency, universities are required to publish a quality improvement plan that will demonstrate how these increased revenues will be used. This plan must be available to students, faculty and

staff to ensure that all members of the institution's community are informed.

To ensure accountability within one year of a tuition increase, institutions must report to their communities and the government on the actual uses of this increased revenue. Our government has not only restored the traditional balance between contributions from students, government and institutions, but we have taken concrete steps to ensure that students see the benefits of any tuition increases.

I'd like to speak next on SuperBuild. It is especially important that we keep post-secondary education accessible at this particular time when we are expecting an increase in enrolment. The Ontario government has been moving forward with a comprehensive plan to prepare Ontario's post-secondary institutions for the double cohort. The double cohort refers to the graduating class of the year 2003, when the first students to complete the new four-year secondary school program will be graduating at the same time as the last students to finish the old five-year program. It is estimated that enrolments in the year 2005-06 may increase by about 88,000 over the year 1998-99.

The government's plan includes many initiatives to expand physical capacity at post-secondary institutions, increase efficiencies in funding, provide financial support to students and ensure students have the information they need to make informed decisions. Our SuperBuild initiative, for example, will see an investment by the government and its partners of \$1.8 billion in campuses across Ontario to meet the projected increase in demand for spaces in Ontario colleges and universities. This commitment to renew and expand colleges and universities will create 73,000 new student places. The province has announced 59 new capital projects, and funding for modernization and renewal of existing college and university campuses. This recent SuperBuild initiative is the single largest capital investment in post-secondary institutions in 30 years.

While we focus on how to keep college and university education accessible, it is important that we not lose sight of the importance of quality. Our initiatives in research are working to keep the best minds working in Ontario, producing innovation and passing their knowledge on to students. Through the SuperBuild initiative, we have undertaken the largest expansion in Ontario's colleges and universities in more than 30 years. With key performance indicators and performance-based funding, we are ensuring that students can make informed decisions and that institutions have increased incentives to deliver quality programs and services.

The bill deals with a number of matters that I've spoken about in terms of the amendments to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act.

1710

As we know, in dealing with this, the accessibility issue is a major focus. The proposed legislation would give the Ontario government flexibility to consider a range of options for financing and administration of

student loans in the future. That is very important, as we've stated in our Blueprint from the previous election, in terms of making education attainable for students throughout the province who are qualified to go to school.

The opportunities that are given to our young students are very important. As I commented, coming from the riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, we're not blessed with a university but we are blessed with a college that is trying to attain a certain status in terms of the programs that can be offered. That allows the students who live within my riding, and not only my riding but Simcoe county, an opportunity to reside at home if they want to get a higher education or to be within commuting distance. We don't have the benefits of other locations where they have universities and colleges together. So the focus that we're putting in place here in terms of ensuring quality and excellence in education permeates right through to my riding in terms of what Georgian College is trying to accomplish with the programs they provide. I commented on one, which is the Canadian Automotive Institute. They've also entered into an initiative in terms of law enforcement with the Ontario Provincial Police Association, in terms of beefing up their program; of dealing also with airline technology; nursing, beside our Royal Victoria Hospital; and a number of initiatives that are very focused on not only giving the skills necessary to obtain real employment when they graduate, but skills that are needed in the various fields: education, health care and the emerging high-tech economy.

It's important that these initiatives that we're looking at and the other initiatives that we've taken in terms of degree-granting status benefit communities that are not blessed, if you want to put it that way, in terms of having a university or having the type of programs that have been put in place in the past. We're still in the embryonic stage of developing a college that will provide opportunities for a growing population, and it has enhanced the educational opportunities for the areas in Simcoe county, and also in the district of Muskoka in terms of providing quality education and perhaps allowing the students, if they want those programs, to be able to reside within the community or to be within commuting distance. Obviously, that has a tremendous and significant impact on the cost of their education.

That's something we take very seriously in Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford and throughout Simcoe county and the district of Muskoka: providing a quality education and opportunities that are within reaching distance for those students. When I was going to university, we had to go to a university in another community. I was fortunate to be able to go to McMaster University to get my post-secondary education. I benefited significantly from not only the community but from that particular university. That's something I hope to have within my own riding some day. We may not be of university status, but we may be of the same type of status that they have given Ryerson: a technical school that can give high-quality education, with the degrees that come with that.

In closing, I just want to say that I support this bill. There obviously are reasons why this legislation had to be brought into place in terms of the loan harmonization between the federal government and the provincial government, but also measures that we have taken to make sure that not only is there accessibility, but also there is quality education and reinvestment in our post-secondary education institutions, be it at a college, a university or a research level in terms of our SuperBuild fund, the ATOP and also the research funding that you find in the initiatives this government has taken. These are billion-dollar initiatives when you combine them all together and significant investment in facility renewal, the likes of which haven't been seen since 1986.

I'd like to close on that note and I look forward to the debate that follows.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions, comments?

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** I want to thank the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for his communiqué or his business plan or the reannouncement. The point I want to make here about announcements is that we've heard time and time again from this government all kinds of announcements. I'd like him to step up to the plate for my riding, because they've announced something like 60 long-term care beds and not one has been built yet. We want to alert the public to this announcement phase that we're going through. Somewhere, at some type of mandate down the line, we're going to hear something, because all we hear is, "Put the spin on it and we'll see what happens."

Overall, this is a necessary piece of legislation, necessary because the banks are getting out of the business of loaning to students. Why? Two major reasons: number one, the default, because students can't find jobs that are well paying enough to pay those loans off; and, number two, they don't make a profit at it. So what's the government going to do? In this very piece of legislation we've got the answer: "The bill will allow the Minister of Finance to assign, transfer or sell student loans.... The Lieutenant Governor in Council," which means it doesn't have to come to this House, has got the ability "to further prescribe terms of agreements regarding student loans and the assignment, transfer or sale"—sell, sell—"of student loans." Somebody is going to be making some money on these kids' backs after they get the money to go to university.

I liken this to the farm situation, where banks in the past gave farmers money, money, money, money, and all of a sudden the interest rates went up and they couldn't pay so they took the farms away from them. What are they going to do, take their degrees back from them?

University tuition fees are 45% higher than they were in 1995-96. University tuition fees make up 40% of what the operating funds are—40%, obscene. Statistics Canada reports that there's a growing gap between the participation rates of students in higher-income families and those who are in lower-income families. It's a game for the rich, and it's going to strike out the students in—

**Mr Christopherson:** I want to respond to a couple of the comments made by the member for Barrie-Simcoe-



Bradford. The first thing is, it's interesting that he's a graduate of McMaster University. I appreciated your saying the nice things you did about the university and that you benefited from being in the community too. We pride ourselves in a lot of graduates feeling that way.

But my question to you is this, and maybe you can comment on this in your two-minute response: given that funding now is less per student than it was in 1995-96—in fact, \$1,300 less per student is being spent on universities now than when you took power from us in 1995—given that that's a 17% reduction in the money being spent on a per student basis, don't you think today's university students are entitled to the same level of quality university education that you benefited from? You went on to become a lawyer. I suspect you did very well.

**Mr Kormos:** He still does.

**Mr Christopherson:** You went on to find your way here. That's right, he's still a lawyer, still practising while he's in the backbenches for that matter. Don't we know that? So you're doing quite well at the public trough, aren't you? What I want to know is, why is it OK for you to take your benefits from that system, but it's not good enough to make sure the money is there to give students of this generation the same opportunity that you had and that you took?

1720

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's a pleasure once again to respond to the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, who I have a lot of respect for. He certainly made some very good points. I think one of the things I tried to address in my remarks, which was much of what Mr Tascona was saying, is that the whole issue of KPIs—the key performance indicators—are an important measurement for students and parents before they make the choice of what school, what program and what is the probable success rate. You would know that they're always looking at graduate satisfaction, employer satisfaction and current student satisfaction. I might say that the remarks have been quite high with respect to the indicators themselves. I'm sure they vary by program, but at the university level there are employment rates after six months and then after two years. It's good to see that there is a high success rate with respect to jobs.

A lot of my constituents have asked over the past some time about the whole issue of the double cohort, two years graduating at once. I think it's important for the record that together with our partners, we've invested \$1.8 billion, the largest post-secondary capital expansion in over 30 years. This is going to create 73,000 new student spaces across the province. By the way, we've also increased the operating grant by \$103 million, up to 2.4 billion.

I certainly think the government is addressing the double cohort issue and that capital expansion, the \$1.8 billion. I know that Durham College and University Centre in my riding of Durham, and president Gary Dolonsky and the board, are very impressed with the amount of money they received under the umbrella of

SuperBuild. We're creating opportunities for students, but students still have tough decisions to make. I am certainly confident that the expansion of giving a degree from a post-secondary institution is something we've been working hard for, and that's opportunities for students where I live and work and represent.

**Mr Agostino:** I just want to debate a couple of minutes with regard to what has been said today and the last couple of days in this House with regard to this particular bill. We talked about some of the changes that have occurred and some of my colleagues have talked about what I think is the most disturbing pattern. What is happening in Ontario in the last five or six years has been clearly a move away from what has generally been accepted as the ability for people to attend post-secondary education, university or college in this province, regardless of income level. That's always been what the dream of this province and this country has been all about. I think all of us have spoken in this room about the dream of most parents—immigrant parents, parents of kids born in this country. It's the opportunity for their kids to do better than they have, to have a better lifestyle, a better way of life, to be able to take care of their family in a better way. That's always been the dream I think we've had in this province and I think it's been a dream that most of us have benefited from. Frankly, I think everybody in this Legislature has benefited from it and millions of Ontarians over the years.

Sadly, what we're seeing from this government is a throwback now to the good old days where university became a playground for the rich, where the only way you could access university, particularly higher-learning—doctors, lawyers, engineering professions—was if your family came from a lot of money. Frankly, most Ontarians are not in that situation. I think it is dangerous what is happening. I think the tuition, the deregulation this government has brought about, the increase in tuition fees this government's brought about, has really made it very, very difficult. Maybe this government thinks they're all wrong, but 70% of Ontarians believe that their kids can't access post-secondary education because of the financial aspect, not because they don't have the smarts or the willingness to work hard or the ability to do it, but because of their financial situation. I think that's a very sad statement for the year 2001 in the province of Ontario, where we're making the universities in this province simply a playground for wealthy people.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Tascona:** I certainly appreciate the comments from all the members. I'm still proud to have gone to McMaster University, despite the comments from the member from Hamilton. I'll say to the member from Brant, commenting about the default rates, I would comment that the default rates have significantly decreased across the system. Certainly as I understand, in universities it's 7.1% and in colleges it's slightly higher. The government has taken a number of initiatives to help decrease the default rates. They are too numerous to mention, but I'll just comment on two: providing Ontario

student opportunity grants so that no student incurs more than \$7,000 of debt per year of study, and credit screening for new loan applicants. Those are a couple of measures.

The member from Hamilton West comments about funding. I have to say that the government has significantly increased the funding for post-secondary education for colleges and universities, and they've significantly increased the funding for operating grants for research and facilities renewal.

The opportunities for young students today are tremendous. I was with the member for Bramalea-Gore in Malton at an event where young students were being provided scholarships for tremendous academic achievement, and I was very proud to be there. I was there that day as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education.

The member from Durham is always on point, focusing on the double cohort, and certainly that matter is well in hand.

I can't really pick up on what the member from Hamilton East was talking about exactly, but I'll say this: the member from Hamilton Centre was more on point than he was, but neither one was correct.

#### **The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Di Cocco:** I'll be sharing my time with the member from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

I'm pleased, first of all, to speak on this bill to harmonize OSAP with Canadian loans. We support the bill because it will simplify life for students and families who need to have these matters simplified, in my estimation. I am pleased to note that this will enable students to borrow money with greater ease for post-secondary education. And that's my point: it's taken six years for the government to address a very simple step that will allow students to access OSAP with greater ease, but again, this bill is just going to make it easier to incur debt.

What's important for me is to take a look at the accessibility issue of post-secondary education. The argument that is at the crux of the matter is not the simplification—this bill addresses one aspect—but the larger aspect for me is when I consistently hear myths.

I heard it the other day in one of the questions. Mike Harris was talking about medical students who have loans and he said very blatantly, "These loans are around \$28,000 on average," but in fact the figure is \$75,000 in average debt. Of course, Mike Harris certainly doesn't want to confuse this debate with facts. "We'll throw out these numbers, but we don't want to talk about the facts."

As Dr Bountrogianni, the member from Hamilton Mountain, clarified, the \$28,000 figure quoted by Mike Harris is not the average debt, but it is the amount of the loan that students can get from OSAP. The actual debt, again, is an average of \$75,000. I want the people in Ontario to know that, because it's important that we speak to facts and not to myths.

What this bill doesn't do, though, is reinstate OSAP to the part-time students that this government cut. Part-time students more and more enter the system because they're working. Adults are changing their careers so they want to go back to school, and oftentimes we don't have OSAP for part-time students.

Does this bill reinstate extra loan forgiveness that was cut? No, it doesn't. Does this bill restore the spirit of the Canadian millennium fund, which was supposed to be over and above what the provincial government gave to students? No, it doesn't.

**1730**

You have not kept up your part of the bargain. There is no partnership with the forgiveness loan; you just give the federal portion of that millennium fund. So when you talk about partnership, you're not in that equation at all.

Post-secondary education, education in general, in my view—I certainly know that Dalton McGuinty understands this, and the Liberal caucus position is that the best tool we have to provide opportunity to children of working families and to people from all demographic financial statuses is post-secondary education. The current policies of the Harris Tories are putting huge obstacles to accessibility to post-secondary education. That is a fact.

Tuition has increased by 60%. As the larger student population has increased, there has been a decrease of 39% in funding with respect to community colleges. We're increasing population, we're increasing students and we are providing fewer dollars per student in this province. Over the past five years, the amount of loan assistance has been increased, but when you consider the number of students, per student there has actually been a decrease.

All evidence toward future economic well-being in this province points to the development of a highly skilled, well-educated workforce. Every industrial country on this globe knows this and understands that the future for sustained prosperity is our human capital. That is where we have sustainability in economic development. That's where we compete on this global marketplace, because that's what we have. Harris and his Tory colleagues appear to have missed this point.

There has been an ideological obsession to giving tax cuts, even if it means adding billions of dollars to the debt and destabilizing education. That's what we have seen in this province. We can talk about a bill that is harmonizing OSAP, but the real discussion with regard to education is the mistakes that have been made by policy that has destabilized education.

There are no forward-moving ideas about development of the highly educated, highly skilled workforce that is needed if we're going to compete in the global marketplace. We cannot compete with the types of policies—they'll certainly have immediate reaction. Someone who receives \$200 can certainly have, if you want, a benefit, but it's only a short-term benefit. Government is supposed to have a vision for long-term economic prosperity, not short-term. Unfortunately, in my view, the



policies of the Harris government are only short-term. They're only quick fixes. Even those are not well managed.

It amazes me that the Harris government is so blind to the value and the return on investment in primary, secondary and post-secondary education. My vision of the Harris government is this driver who's blindfolded in a car, just driving, who doesn't have any idea where they're going when it comes to education. They've missed the point. They talk about tax cuts. The rhetoric is very good, but the action certainly speaks to me of a blind driver going down the highway. You can imagine the chaos that that would create and has been created, in my view.

Let's reiterate what my colleague from Hamilton Mountain said: the simple harmonization certainly is insufficient to address the oncoming crises in post-secondary education. What always amazes me in this House is the capacity for Harris and his colleagues to put their head in the sand and selectively ignore their own task force recommendations stating the need for increased funding in post-secondary education. It's in your own Portals and Pathways: A Review of Post-secondary Education in Ontario, February 2001. According to the report, we are at a crossroads and the projected revenue gap threatens the very survival of Ontario post-secondary institutions.

And you're right. Institutions are aging, and the deferred maintenance costs stand at \$900 million in universities and \$300 million in colleges. These are the figures from your own task force. I want to remind the Tory members that these are deferred maintenance costs and not new buildings. We haven't even addressed that.

When you want to talk about poor management, it is incumbent on me to conclude that the Harris government cannot manage because they have not even yet given to the universities and colleges this year's budget. They haven't provided to them the dollars for universities and colleges to conduct their daily operations. They're sitting there operating—still teaching; they have no other alternatives. But the Harris government is sitting here—we are now in May. What kind of managers would not provide the funding or even give an indication to that sector of what they must spend, or have to spend?

I want to give time to my colleague, and I certainly want to state that, to me, when you talk about good management, you cannot manage any sector if you do not understand the value of supporting that sector in every area: primary, secondary and post-secondary. It has been, if you want to call it, the character of this government to discount education in this province, and post-secondary is also a part of being discounted.

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 19 this afternoon. I would like to commend my colleague the member from Sarnia-Lambton, who I believe, as she always does, has made some very salient points on the bill at hand.

I would like to speak this afternoon from my perspective as a mother with four teenagers. One is in the post-secondary setting. We have two youngsters who will be, together, entering post-secondary institutions the year after next. Our daughter is in grade 8, so we have a few years to wait before she enters that.

So I am keenly aware when we talk about, first of all, the importance of encouraging young people to gain post-secondary training in order that they will be able to be successful and contribute in a meaningful way to the economy of our province and that they can be happy in their lives and in their workplace and in their communities. I know first-hand of that experience in nurturing that within families and communities.

The concern I have, though, is that Bill 19, sadly—it's an important bill, but there is much more that I believe this government needs to do to repair the legacy it has created for the children in the province of Ontario. I'm very disturbed by the fact that the average student debt in the province has doubled under the watch of this government.

1740

I look at the students who are seated before you, Mr Speaker, this afternoon. We have the blessing of these wonderful young people assisting us here on a daily basis. I look at them and I can't tell you how badly I feel about what we do in this House, about what it will mean for them. What it means for the young people here today is that, when they graduate, chances are their debt will be significantly higher. How unfortunate that is.

Also, when we consider the policies of the government, the debt in the province of Ontario has increased by 25% under the watch of Mike Harris. For the young men and women who are seated before the Speaker, that is a burden they will carry. It will be their responsibility to look after that debt.

It's sad we have to explain to these young people that one of the big reasons they're going to be carrying that load is so this government can provide tax cuts to corporations in the province. While you have perhaps experienced some period of uncertainty in your school—there may have been job actions in your school community; there are a variety of other situations in the province that would affect your family—the debt you will be paying off when you are working in the province will be the debt that was accrued to pay for tax cuts. Those debts were not incurred so that you would pay less for your education, so that you could get a job and help carry and pay for the burden you will have, sadly, but what you will be paying off will be money Mike Harris borrowed to pay for corporate tax cuts.

I wish I could stand in the Legislature this afternoon and bring the young people who assist us in this Legislature a happier message, but sadly that is the reality.

In my opinion, with this bill, while it does address an important piece of business that needs to happen so that students in the province will be able to continue accessing funds so they can attend post-secondary institutions, this government has missed an opportunity to bring

forward some progressive legislation that would enable families, that would assist people like the young people who are here helping us in the Legislature so that the burden they will have when they graduate will be less.

We know that in the province there are many families who, for a variety of reasons, must avail themselves of some social services, whether it be subsidized daycare, disability payments or welfare payments. Before these people might be able to access those very necessary services if mom and dad find themselves in some difficulty or in need, or mom or dad depending on who the caregiver might be, and find themselves in that situation, should they have the good fortune, or their children may have the good fortune, of being beneficiaries in an estate—for example, if grandma or grandpa died and left the children some money to set aside for their university or college education—the Tory government is saying to those families, “You know those savings the kids have? Before we will give you dollars to live on, you have to cash in those savings.”

So the opportunity for the young people to access post-secondary education and perhaps not have to look forward to as much debt at the end of their time in college or university is virtually wiped away, because Mike Harris is saying, “No, we want those savings. They’re the kids’ savings? It doesn’t matter. We want them. We don’t want to be seen to give anyone a hand up who has any savings in the bank. That’s just not going to happen.”

Who is really penalized? It’s the children. I think it’s a heartless law. I think that now, under Bill 19, the government has an opportunity to do the right thing: to provide an opportunity and a hope within families that may not be financially blessed, but yet there’s the hope there that their youngsters, their children, will be able to access an education that will be a key to their success.

There’s an article in the Toronto Sun this week that speaks directly to this point: 79% of parents who were surveyed in a study believe they will not be able to afford the education their children will require in order to be successful in their lives. When I say “successful,” I don’t necessarily mean they’re going to make a lot of money, but that they will be able to attain jobs where they can be happy, where they can go to work every day and contribute to their communities, our economy and their families in a meaningful way. It’s a concern across the province, and the media are trying to bring the focus and attention of the government to the fact that a lot of people are now very worried that their children will not be able to access what is so very key and so very integral to what will be their success in the future.

I’m sorry the government has not taken the opportunity to do something meaningful for the children of this province.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the member. She spent a fair bit of time talking essentially about the level of student indebtedness and the way in which the fear of

that will stop many families from pursuing that opportunity for their own children, or how many young people themselves who don’t wish to bring that kind of debt burden on their families will make that choice. There really is a whole group in society that we risk seeing cut out of access to post-secondary education. The member is right: this bill does not address those very facts.

This bill comes about as a result of the kind of massive increases in tuition that we’ve seen in the last little while and the increase in student indebtedness out there as it is. It really is as a result of financial institutions—banks and others—saying, “We’re no longer prepared to take the risk on student loans.” These growing numbers, as they get larger, have become an issue of risk assessment for the banks. So the federal government took steps, and now the provincial government is taking corresponding steps—it is understandable. But I have to say there are a couple of parts of the legislation that give me concern.

The member is right: there’s a lot it doesn’t address. But let’s focus on what it does address: the fact that the minister can enter into agreements regarding student loan arrangements and that the minister—ministerial powers—will be able to assign, transfer or sell student loans. I worry about that possibility for the further privatization or reprivatization of student debt, and at what cost, at what interest cost, and to whom? Are we talking back to financial institutions at an extraordinary premium in order to finance the risk that’s there? It’s not clear. I really do believe this is a question of public discussion. There should be public policy. It shouldn’t be left to ministerial order behind closed doors.

I think there are areas of this bill that perhaps we should look to amend to ensure there is more transparency and openness to the process.

**Mr Gill:** It is a pleasure to join in the debate with the members from Sarnia-Lambton, Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington—that’s almost as long a riding name as mine, which is Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale—and of course Beaches-East York.

**Mr Tilson:** Can you say that again?

**Mr Gill:** Yes. It’s worth repeating, I guess, but we’ll get right down to the debate and carry on.

One of the things we just talked about, which I think the member from Beaches-East York mentioned, was the risk these banks were taking. That is actually incorrect. These loans have always been guaranteed by the government, and even under the new arrangement they will continue to be guaranteed by the government.

Basically what happened was that on May 4, 1999, the federal minister, Mr Pettigrew, and Minister Johnson signed the harmonization agreement whereby the provincial government would be providing these loans. There are a few points that even then they realized how beneficial it’s going to be to the students, one of them being that it will eliminate duplication and overlap with the student completing only one set of forms. It seems like a small point, but nonetheless it gives easier accessibility to the students. It also says it will sig-



nificantly increase the interest relief period for student loan borrowers in Ontario. Basically what it does is that instead of having 18 months of loan interest relief, if somebody is trouble—they're having difficulty—this will extend it to 30 months. I think it's a good bill.

1750

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** I'd like to thank the members for Sarnia-Lambton and Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington for their comments today, and I'd like to add a few brief comments to what they've said.

I think we acknowledge that this legislation is needed. The banks have withdrawn their support of students in this province and obviously we, along with the government, have to provide for something to fill that gap. But let's look at the practical side of this. As has been mentioned over and over again today, tuition fees have increased in the neighbourhood of 45% since 1995, and we can go on however much we want about providing this assistance for students, but the basic problem is that post-secondary education in this province simply costs too much for many students today who look to have a higher education.

I can think back to the late 1980s and early 1990s when Joan's and my children, Nancy and David, went to university. They worked at part-time jobs and they provided funding for their own education, but, as well, we as a family had to contribute. We were a family of average means, and it was very difficult for us. I can remember one figure that I kept track of. I had in a ledger that we spent over \$50,000 on their education. Today it's even much greater than that, so we have to get to the basic problem, and that is to make education affordable for all our young people.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Christopherson:** I'm pleased to rise and comment on the remarks of the members for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and Sarnia-Lambton. Both of them, to one degree or another, talked about or at least made reference to the underfunding of universities.

Let's take a look at what the picture is in terms of the numbers. I know we have the member for Durham stand up and just read out numbers and say, "This is how much money we are spending, and isn't it a glorious amount?" But, quite frankly, if you aren't referencing or comparing it to something, it doesn't mean anything. The fact of the matter is that in terms of capital investment, your average

per year has been \$39,884,000 during the biggest economic boom in North American history. Ours, during the depths of a recession, recognizing the importance, was \$79,626,000 in operating expenditures. If you don't do it on a per student basis, you're not really comparing apples to apples. When you compare it on a per student basis, it's \$1,300 per student, 17% less than when they took power in 1995.

I want to also point out that their operating grants have been cut by \$255 million, for a cumulative loss of \$2 billion. On top of that we've got 60% increases in tuition, and you want the public of Ontario to believe that you care about our university system? No capital funding, no operating funding and tuition fees are going through the ceiling. No wonder students and families are terrified out there about their futures.

**Ms Di Cocco:** First of all, I want to state that the Ontario Liberals see education as a key component to sustainable prosperity. That means investment and accessibility to post-secondary education. I don't know how many times we have to say this: the key to sustainable prosperity, to good economic policy in this province, is investment in education and in post-secondary education.

One of the most interesting aspects of the report *Portals and Pathways: A Review of Post-Secondary Education in Ontario*—this was a government task force—is the strong recommendation for increased funding in post-secondary education. Assessing the adequacy of government funding didn't fall within the mandate of this task force, yet a significant portion of the report is dedicated to the very topic.

Again, I will say that we're at a crossroads. The finding states that Ontario's post-secondary institutions are both cost-effective and innovative, efficient and fiscally responsible. However, as the task force stated, we are at a crossroads: "The projected revenue gap threatens the very survival of Ontario's post-secondary education."

Please remember, it seems to me that your cabinet offices can more than double in their costs, but when it comes to our post-secondary education, they are being starved.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 1758.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

# CONTENTS

Tuesday 8 May 2001

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

<b>Northern health travel grant</b>	
Mrs McLeod.....	503
<b>Poverty</b>	
Mr Martin.....	503
<b>Events in Northumberland</b>	
Mr Galt.....	503
<b>Pat Carey</b>	
Mr Kennedy.....	504
<b>Great Lakes Public School</b>	
Mr Spina.....	504
<b>Community health services</b>	
Mr Hoy.....	504
<b>Education Week</b>	
Mr Johnson.....	504
<b>Statutory holidays</b>	
Mr Duncan.....	505
<b>Volunteers</b>	
Mr Miller.....	505

## FIRST READINGS

<b>City of Greater Sudbury Amendment Act, 2001,</b>	
Bill 43, <i>Mr Bartolucci</i>	
Agreed to.....	505
Mr Bartolucci.....	506
<b>Gas Price Watchdog Act,</b>	
2001, Bill 44, <i>Mr Colle</i>	
Agreed to.....	506
Mr Colle.....	506

## ORAL QUESTIONS

<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr McGuinty.....	509
Mr Harris.....	509, 514, 515
Mr Hampton.....	514
Mr Parsons.....	515
<b>Ipperwash Provincial Park</b>	
Mr Phillips.....	510
Mr Harris.....	510, 512
Mr Hampton.....	512
<b>Competitive electricity market</b>	
Mr Hampton.....	511
Mr Harris.....	511
<b>Nurse practitioners</b>	
Mr McGuinty.....	512
Mr Clement.....	512
<b>Sports and recreation</b>	
Mr Wood.....	513
Mr Hudak.....	513
<b>Children with special needs</b>	
Mr Gravelle.....	513
Mr Harris.....	513
<b>Ontarians with disabilities legislation</b>	
Mr Chudleigh.....	514
Mr Jackson.....	514

## Victims of crime

Mr O'Toole.....	516
Mr Young.....	516

## Rural economic development

Mr Peters.....	516
Mr Coburn.....	516, 517
Mr Johnson.....	517

## Child poverty

Mr Martin.....	517
Mr Harris.....	517

## Northern Ontario heritage fund

Mr Ramsay.....	518
Mr Harris.....	518

## Research and development

Mr Stewart.....	518
Mr Wilson.....	518

## PETITIONS

<b>OPP dispatch centre</b>	
Mrs Dombrowsky.....	519
<b>Affordable housing</b>	
Mr Marchese.....	519
<b>Reinstatement of teacher</b>	
Mr Tascona.....	519
<b>Safe streets legislation</b>	
Mr Crozier.....	519
<b>Protection of minors</b>	
Mr Wood.....	520, 521
<b>Services for the developmentally disabled</b>	
Mr Hoy.....	520
<b>Horse riding safety</b>	
Mrs Munro.....	520
<b>Private home daycare</b>	
Mr Lalonde.....	520
<b>Doctor shortage</b>	
Mr Marchese.....	520
<b>Brain tumours</b>	
Mr Wood.....	521, 522
<b>Home care</b>	
Mr Cleary.....	521
<b>Northern health travel grant</b>	
Mrs McLeod.....	521
<b>Bear hunting</b>	
Mr Gerretsen.....	522

## SECOND READINGS

<b>Ontario Student Loan Harmonization Act, 2001, Bill 19, Mrs Cunningham</b>	
Mr Galt.....	522, 525
Mrs Bountrogianni.....	524
Mr Marchese.....	524, 529, 533
Mr Gill.....	525, 529, 532, 541
Ms Di Cocco.....	525, 538, 541
Mr Parsons.....	526
Mr Gerretsen.....	527, 530, 533
Mr Kormos.....	528

Mr Gravelle.....	529
Mr Christopherson.....	530, 534, 537, 541
Mr Martiniuk.....	533
Mr Tascona.....	534, 538
Mr Levac.....	536
Mr O'Toole.....	537
Mr Agostino.....	537
Mrs Dombrowsky.....	539
Ms Lankin.....	540
Mr Crozier.....	541
Debate deemed adjourned.....	541

## OTHER BUSINESS

### Visitors

The Speaker.....	505
Ms Di Cocco.....	505

### Member's dissatisfaction

The Speaker.....	506
------------------	-----

### Quebec National Assembly

Mr Ecker.....	506
---------------	-----

### VE Day

Mr Jackson.....	506
Mr Gerretsen.....	507
Mr Hampton.....	508

## TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 8 mai 2001

## PREMIÈRE LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2001 modifiant la Loi sur la ville du Grand Sudbury, projet de loi 43, M. Bartolucci</b>	
Adoptée.....	505
<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'agent de surveillance des prix du carburant, projet de loi 44, M. Colle</b>	
Adoptée.....	506

## DEUXIÈME LECTURE

<b>Loi de 2001 sur l'harmonisation des prêts d'études de l'Ontario, projet de loi 19, M<sup>me</sup> Cunningham</b>	
Débat présumé ajourné.....	541













